FILM

NEW FILMS
FOR 1937

The Gas Industry presents a programme selected from the following films, ready in the Autumn

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The future of the nation is with the children. This film reviews the whole system of public education in this country which is forming the citizens of to-morrow. Are they being taught the right things? Are the new schools going up fast enough? This film, which contains no reference to gas, will do for education what the Nutrition Film, last year, did for the study of diet.

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and two new cooking films

HOW TO COOK With Marcel Boulestin

MILK COOKERY With a talented cow

Anyone who would like a film show arranged, or who wishes to borrow copies of the films, should write to the British Commercial Gas Association, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1, if outside London, or the Gas Light and Coke Company, Horseferry Road S.W.1, for London

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REALIST FILM UNIT

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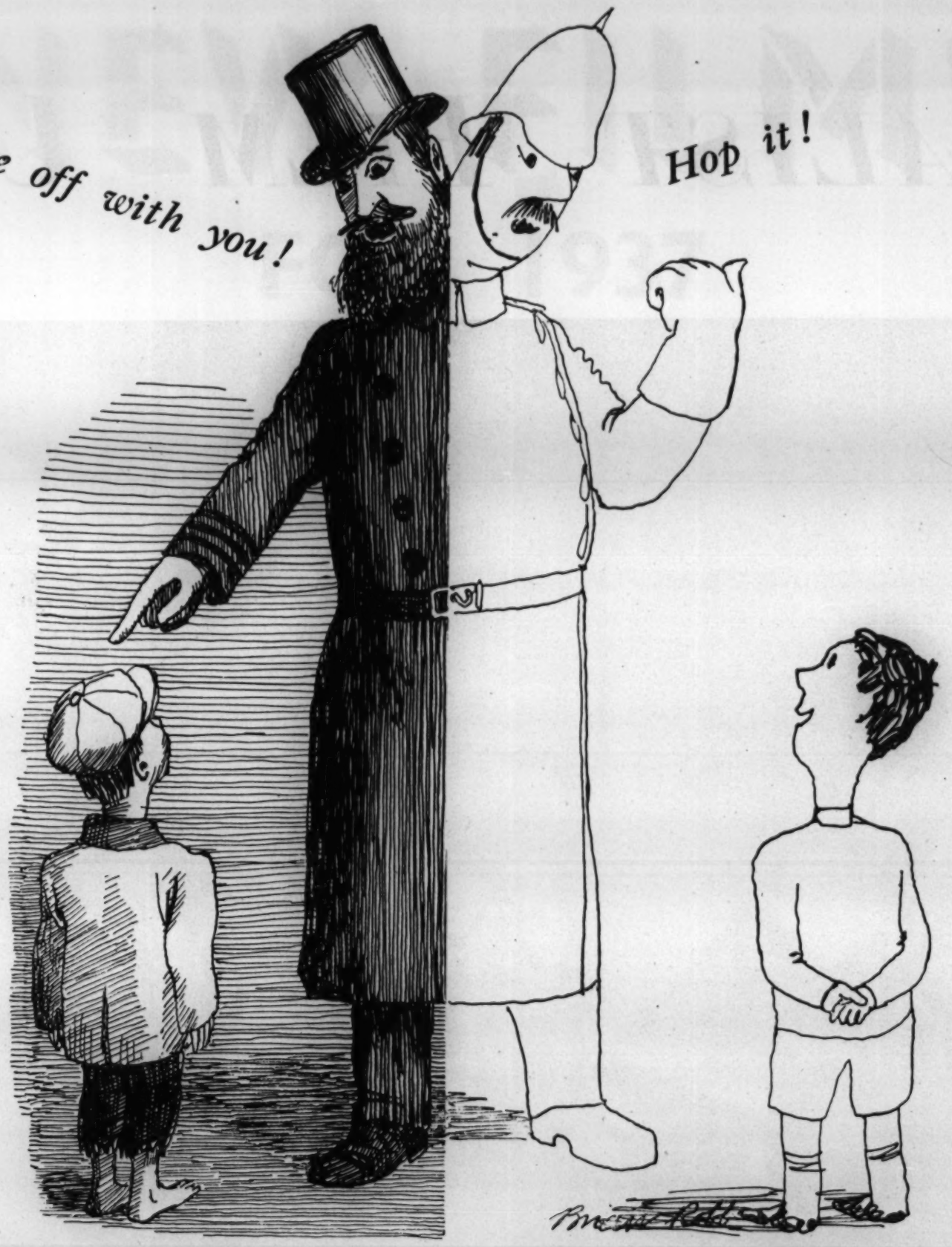

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YOU CAN BE SURE OF SHELL

world FILM news

AND TELEVISION PROGRESS
(INCORPORATING CINEMA QUARTERLY)

VOL. 2 NO. 5 | PRICE: ONE SHILLING | AUGUST 1937

THE REASON I'M GOOD — I go to the pictures

MAX MILLER TALKS TO HARRY WATT

"Good evening, Mr. Miller," I said . . . .

"Which do I prefer? Films or this? This, of course, because you get your laughs, see. You can wait for your laughs. If you don't get your laughs you can gag. You know, put across something. In a film you put 'em across cold. But it's all right afterwards. You can sit back comfortable and see the boy's good. It's funny how different your voice sounds on the film though, ain't it? The first time I heard it my stomach went like that. Yes, like that. Honest. I said 'that ain't me.' But it was. Like that my stomach was going.

"No, but I reckon we ought to copy the Americans. Why? Because they know how to put over a gag. If it's a good one, they chuck it over natural like and have another ready behind it.

"The reason I'm good is I go to the pictures. Never labour a gag, I say. Some English comedians are so pleased with a good gag that they make it an act. I'm always looking for gags. I'm a good comic because I live at Brighton. I try all my gags on the boys on the train. If an English comic lives in London he goes to bed at three and gets up at four the next day. If the wife's out, he's got no one to try his gags on.

"The director? He's got to know your type of stuff. I've had some—I said I wouldn't do it anymore—but Bill Beaudine, he's all right—he's an American, see—so he knows comedy. He comes to me and says, 'Here's the lines for the next bit, Max.' And maybe I say, 'They stink, Bill. How about me taking a cup of coffee and working out a few gags?' And if he likes them they're all right, see. But if he says 'No' then they're out. He's American, see.

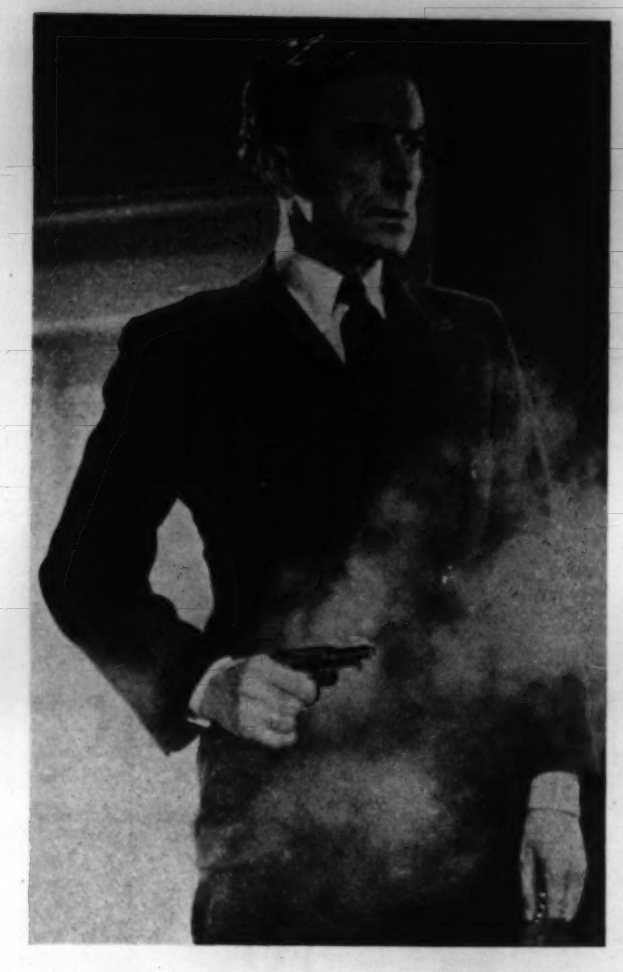
"That's right. Always must have pathos. There's a boxer in my last picture—big he was, like that—I treat him like a baby. Honest, just like a baby. But I wouldn't play with kids in a picture. Always steal the picture they do. Might as well let them have the picture and get on with it.

"The first film I did was *The Good Companions*. 'It's a nice little part, Max,' they said. I was playing Birmingham that week. I dropped in on the Sunday and walked right on and did the bit. Music plugger I was. Twenty minutes it took me. Like the Americans, see. Just work your gags natural and easy. And reckon on your audiences getting the point. The trouble with English comics is that they think they've got to repeat a gag ten times before the audience catches on, see. The Americans know that if a gag doesn't catch first time, it's a lousy gag. So they've got another one ready.

"Yes, I know I'm an English comedian, but I use the American style. You've got to nowadays. English humour's out of date. It creaks. I get more ideas for gags talking to an American for five minutes than to an Englishman for five hours. The Americans know all the answers. They're quick, see. They're funny even when they're not trying to be. They're alive.

"Of course there's a future for British comedies. But they must move fast. And none of this la-di-da stuff. Big laugh in *Educated Evans* was when I was sitting with a posh girl—all dressed up she was—and the waiter says 'Dinner is served.' 'Put it back in the oven, I'm not ready,' I says. Real high society it was. But I brought it down to earth. Real life stuff you want, of real people. Like you and me, see. Well, I've got to see a man round the front of the house. Why don't you drop in and see the show next week, chum? Good-night, pal."

"Good-night, Max," I said.



"Crooks . . .

ARMAMENT RINGS ASSASSINS AND POLITICAL MADMEN

Our major national problems as seen in British Films by

Russell Ferguson

OUR national life, as reflected in British films, is full of interesting features. We are a nation of retired business men, mill owners, radio singers, actors, detectives, newspapermen, leading ladies, soldiers, secret service men, crooks, smugglers, and international jewel thieves.

Some of us are only waiters, boxers, chemists, and brilliant young inventors, but the national custom of marrying our employers' daughters may be relied upon to remedy this.

Some of us, indeed, are only poor village blacksmiths, but there is no reason to be ashamed of this, for we have millionaire sons in the background. The majority of us move in society.

One thing is quite clear. We don't work in coal pits or fishing boats or shops or shipyards or iron foundries, and that is something to be thankful for.

We have our servants and employees of course, upon whom we rely for most of our national humour. Not that we do not have a good deal of fun ourselves, sometimes, at house parties or the like, dressing up in other people's clothes, or being mistaken for somebody else, but we do not have a great deal of time for that sort of thing, because mostly we are in trouble with new plays that won't go, or documents that have been stolen, or murders that we didn't commit, or stolen jewels, or international complications.

With all this on our minds, it is little wonder that we are not a humorous nation. Fortunately, our butlers, chauffeurs, bus drivers and waitresses compensate to some extent for this, with their quaint vulgarities. They do not have so much to think about.

When it is not worry, it is love that keeps us from joking. Apart from hotel adventures which are scarcely worthy of the name of love, our affairs are pretty serious. Of course, our bus drivers have their women folks, and our waitresses can be seen occasionally making sheep's eyes at men, but such people are usually married already, and talk about their "old man" or their "old woman" as such people will. In any case their affairs are not to be considered serious, for it is a well-established principle in this country that love is not really love at all unless it is expressed in cultured tones.

Some seniors among us, Lancashire mill owners and Scottish bankers and so on have not lost our rough provincial tongues, but in such circumstances we send our children to school so that when they grow up they will be able to make love to each other in pleasant accents. Otherwise we should die out.

Our troubles are really endless. Happily, we are not bothered with unemployment, malnutrition, distressed areas, disease, or poverty, but the number of chemical formulæ, state documents and bonds that are stolen every year is most distressing, and thousands of pounds worth of jewels are constantly going astray. Then there are business rivalries to think about, and continual murders, and crooks from America. These are our major national problems.

We are fortunate in having a wonderful army, in which all the soldiers are very happy and contented, and enjoy themselves thoroughly, at least until they are killed. Our fighting navy is equally grand, quelling South Americans with hardly any losses. By a long-established national custom, all naval and military battles result in a wedding.

Our foreign affairs on the whole are very serene. Our greatest trouble is spies and fanatics, who threaten from time to time to blow up London, or to bring down all the machines at Hendon with death rays. There has been a great deal of this in recent months. Where the emissaries and agents come from is not always very clear, but it is certain that they are active enough.

Encouraged by a partial success early in the year, when a bomb intended for Piccadilly tube station blew up in a West End street, the spies and agents of foreign powers have been hard at it ever since with clocks and bombs and rays and wireless-controlled planes. London has escaped by a series of miracles.

What with armament rings, assassins and political madmen, it is a mercy that a good proportion of our population are in the Secret Service.

. . . and business men"

EDITORIAL

Projecting Britain

THE ORGANISATION BY the Travel and Industrial Association of a service of British films to over-sea countries, is a departure of first-class importance. Mr. Elton in his discussion of the work on another page, rightly emphasises the remarkable feat of building up a circulation in twenty-eight different countries. The Association has clearly become a leading force in that projection of Britain which Sir Stephen Tallents called for so eloquently seven years ago.

Like all cultural propaganda, the work of the Travel and Industrial Association has been sorely restricted by lack of adequate funds and support. Though a protégé of the Department of Overseas Trade, its grant from the Government is discouragingly small for really effective operations. Though supplements to this grant come from national interests and public corporations, these vary so considerably as to keep the Association in a perpetual state of uncertainty. These are not perhaps ideal conditions for cultural work on an international scale. It is remarkable that in spite of these difficulties, the basic machinery for the showing of the face of Britain abroad should have been created.

With the Foreign Office restive under the effect of anti-British propaganda, it would appear less than wise to content ourselves with political protest. A more considered and positive policy has become necessary. From the point of view of British Government and British commerce, some might even hold that the matter is an urgent one. The machinery lies to our hand, and in no branch of cinema have our producers shown themselves so competent as in the production of those descriptive films which would help in the task. The occasion calls for a constructive policy under which more films can be made and a distribution system adequate to so high a purpose created. With the disappointment of the Coronation from an international point of view upon us, with intelligent French observers criticising our British Pavilion at the Paris Exhibition, it is not good enough, for example, that the grants to the Foreign Office and Overseas Trade Departments for cultural relations should be rather less than it takes to build a small theatre in a provincial town.

Wanted, Writers

FROM THE PRODUCERS of documentary films comes the complaint that there is in Britain to-day a dearth of descriptive writers. The novelists, say the film people, are too diffuse and unfactual; the journalists, though analytical and precise, have been too closely schooled in the avoidance of theme for them to invest their stories with either drama or importance. It would seem that a new horizon opens before the young writer, and that the achievements of the realist film makers might be matched in a new species of descriptive writing. The essentials are a regard for facts, the ability to carry facts on the wings of narrative, a sense of the drama inherent in facts and the power to bring the observation of fact to an issue.

The concern of the film makers is, we suspect, largely prompted by the success of *March of Time*. Though in Britain its film values are not highly regarded, its journalistic power is a matter for envy and imitation. No one cares who shoots the film but everyone would like to catch the secret of Larsen and De Rochemont, the two men who are responsible for writing it.

With Russia succeeding so well in the simplification of economics and mechanics and America on top of the world in the dramatic description of public affairs, it is obviously time that we remembered our own tradition of Defoe. Mr. Baldwin maintained the other day that the weakness of our time was a weakness in poets. For poets read commentators and remember the B.B.C. as well as the cinema.

O them Llamas!

THE LLAMA IS A graceful animal. We are reminded of this by the fate of our last number, which carried on its front a high-standing and even good looking example of the species. To make sentimental appeal an infant llama was attached to the foreground. From many quarters we have received congratulations on our llamas. WORLD FILM NEWS—so it has been interpreted—has abandoned the vulgar display of such film stars as Garbo and Laurel and Hardy, and is now, by evidence of the llamas, in full and highbrow pursuit of the arts.

While never averse to admiration on the part of our readers, the analysis is false. Llamas are graceful animals and in a general way, but like many immature aesthetes they are not exciting in detail. According to medical testimony their legacy to humanity is not distinguished. In any case we do not serve art by pretty pictures on the cover, but by fighting for art in the more arduous pages within. And we are not forgetful of our responsibilities to art when we dive headlong into the maelstrom of film politics and say our say about film finance, censorship and quota. We serve the art of cinema the better, or so we think, by coming down from llamic heights to the dust of the market place. We hope our readers will follow us in this distinction. There is much to create and we are not going to do it by getting excited over llamas, however graceful.

In this Issue

	Page
The Reason I'm Good—Interview with Max Miller, by Harry Watt	3
Armament Rings, Assassins and Political Madmen, by Russell Ferguson	4
Editorial	5
Acting for Stage and Screen, by Robert Donat	6–7
"Six-Shooters" and Shakespeare, by Hector McCullie	8–9
Films Reviewed by John Grierson and Basil Wright	10–11
From Monmouth to Movies, by Richard Carr	12–13
Pipe Dreams of London and Hollywood, by Herman Weinberg	14–15
The Japanese Benchi, by Oswald M. Wynd	17
World Opinion	18–19
India's Rope-Trick Talkies, by C. K. Sachi	20
Lab. Workers' Conditions	21
People of the Studios	22–23
Review of Reviews	24–27
Cockalorum	28–29
Newsreel Rushes	30–31
People with Purposes	32, 33, 35
Letters	36
Radio and Television	37
Costume Drama—But Not Too Much, by Sinclair Hill	39
Film Guide	40–41
Amateur and Technical Section	43–48

Bronchos and Blondes

FEW GENTLEMEN prefer blondes to bronchos, and Hollywood despite ephemeral successes in other *genres*, has never yet discovered a more satisfactory kind of picture than that in which all the characters—except the silvery haired old mother, who stayed at home graciously shooting Indians with a musket—used periodically to gallop down a precipice in a heavy downpour of black rain. It is true that recent cowboy films have shown a slight tendency to degeneracy. Horses, for one thing, have lost that wonderful turn of speed they used to have in the old silent days, and nowadays, even when extended, rarely go faster on the films than they do in real life. Hollywood is badly mistaken if it imagines that this concession to a pedantic naturalism pleases the public taste; we were brought up on horses which could do their seventy or eighty m.p.h. with ease over very bad going indeed, and those are the kind of horses that we like.

A more obvious and therefore less insidious symptom of decay is the intrusion of crooning into the great open spaces. On the range, in the saloon, and even sometimes among the wigwams and tepees, both paleface and redskin have formed the wholly regrettable habit of bursting at frequent intervals into song, and song of a painfully sentimental kind. This will not do. A Red Indian is not there to utter love-calls, but to use his tomahawk like a man until retribution overtakes him (which it does partly on account of his villainy, but chiefly because of his passion for standing silhouetted on sky-lines, an easy target for the hero, even at the customary range of two and a half miles). It is high time Hollywood stopped mixing melody with mustangs, and it is to be hoped that the cowboys will take advantage of their improved economic position to remedy the abuses which beset their calling. At the same time it must be understood that there is to be no nonsense about the heroine, who is still just as good as she ever was and in no need of reform. Let no impious hand ruffle those golden locks which escaped disarray even at moments when she could hardly call her scalp her own. Let no one curb her impulse to throw open the log-cabin door to masked and hooded strangers when she has been left alone. Let no one suggest that when thrown into a torrent she ought to get wet or that when flung over a cliff she might be expected to suffer abrasions. Let no one change anything about her. For many of us—as she stands in her simple Paris dress gazing wistfully out across the prairie, waiting for somebody to knock her down and bind her hand and foot—for many of us she is the woman of our dreams.

—Editorial in The Times

Acting for Stage and Screen

"Robert Donat is brilliant" wrote A. G. MacDonell, reviewing "Footnotes to the Film" for the Sunday Observer. We are glad to print here an extract from Robert Donat's chapter in this book for the benefit of our readers.

MORE daft remarks are made in defence of the theatre and the cinema than in any other cause. Why should I defend the cinema, which has borrowed so blatantly from the theatre and is so slavishly dependent on it for new recruits? We are apt to forget that even the picture-frame of the cinema screen is pinched directly from the modern picture-frame stage.

And the theatre? The theatre, of course, has been in the throes of death ever since films began—and earlier. Silent films having failed in the extermination, talkies were invented to deal the death blow. And now television prepares its fatal draught. Meanwhile the theatre, announcing its Positively Farewell Performances, is crammed to bursting point just as often as the fare it proffers proves irresistible to a wayward public.

For myself, I shall return to the stage as often as a good play comes my way. The trouble is, good scenarios are far more plentiful than good plays—by which I mean good entertainment; and I am not ashamed of being voted at the box-office as a good entertainer. In seven years the theatre has offered me one great play, half a dozen possible plays, two exciting gambles and innumerable duds. Until something really exciting comes along, I go on making films—and enjoy making them enormously. I make my film, seeing it grow day by day until it is finished; then I have shot my bolt and I can look around for new doors to fasten. On the stage one has to try to shoot the same bolt eight times a week for as long as the damn door will remain on its hinges. Few plays are worth that dreadful grind. One of our finest actors recently complained of being in a state of coma towards the end of a run; is it to be wondered that after 400 performances he found it just too hard a wick to keep alight? Even our own Noel Coward collapses after two short seasons playing in some of the most delightful theatricalities ever produced.

There is a certain snobbery among stage actors where filming is concerned; they look upon it as a rather boring, well-paid joke. Their performances in front of the camera, if also rather boring, are not quite so much of a joke. They give rise to the oft-repeated cry: "Where *are* our actors?" Then, too late, they discover they have not gone quite the right way about it. Instead of just acting "a little less" they find out that they must try to act a little better. That is why actors who are successful both on stage and screen are few and far between. It is a very serious business, but increasingly fascinating and worth while.

A stock question is: "What is the difference between Stage Acting and Screen Acting—and which is the more difficult?" I am always inclined to be impatient with this query and reply: "Well, you've paid to see them both, haven't you noticed?" Wouldn't you feel a little annoyed, dear reader, if asked: "How do toffee apples compare with apple fritters?" The only sensible answer is that toffee and puddings cannot be compared—my point being that, ideally, the cinema cannot demand the same as the theatre. "The cinema can do what the theatre cannot do." This is the champion goat-getter where I am concerned; it is about as bright and useful as comparing the flute to the Mighty Wurlitzer.

I am not belittling the progress of the cinema; in terms of sheer improvement—mere technical *advance*—the industry has much to crow about. But its technique is limited and I would remind you of that. Speed sometimes describes circles and does not travel very far. The cinema, as a technique, has travelled quite far enough and is in fine fettle for the artist now. But "Amazing Technical Resources" is just so much bunk. Ever thought about it? The whole history of the cinema can boast no greater triumph than the theatre's achievement of running *Cavalcade* at Drury Lane for eleven months. It has done similar things, but nothing better. It has wielded larger crowds and used bigger lifts and rotated greater weights and lowered and lifted larger curtains, but what else? The theatre has had water tanks for years. The one into which my double dived in *Monte Cristo* was bigger and deeper and had a glass side, but these are gadgets which the theatre has long since scrapped. Nothing will ever erase from my memory the impression of Red Indian after Red Indian in canoe after canoe coming down a water spout as steep as the side of a house at the Manchester Hippodrome. I have seen Niagara on the screen several times since then; comparatively it left me cold.

What can be said of an infant still perversely sprawling in the cradle it has long since outgrown? The cinema has not chosen its own way of life, like the ultra-modern child at the ultra-modern school. Oh dear, no. It has suffered the most rigorous discipline, the sternest of all restrictions—commercialisation. No child has covered so much ground and progressed so little. In its forty years it has created and discarded a score of fashions but has left us no traditions. Yet the prodigy is so promising we are at a loss which school to put it to! A difficult child, born dumb, it suddenly acquired the gift of speech after thirty years.

When we consider it, this amazing creature has got away with a good deal. Do you realise that quite a good proportion of the early antics were not photographed at all, simply because the cameras could not record them? A merciful thing in some ways, though an alarming idea for the actor to swallow, and rather a shock for the public, too; they were not getting anything like one hundred per cent of the performance they were paying to see. For years it gave us nothing more or less than conventionalised grimaces based on an alleged emotion which it would be insincere to describe by any other name than "Lurve," and the old stock-in-trade of Melodrama (still its strongest card). Direction was often so inexact that when the hero was supposed to be saying, "Darling, I love you," in actuality he was probably murmuring, "I think you're lousy." By degrees the film-makers rediscovered cruelty, and the public licked its chops over voluptuousness. Then Grief stepped in in the form of Glycerine. I have no statistics, but it would take the needs of a world war to compete with the quantity that coursed its milky way from the stars. Bill Hart alone—dear William S.—must have kept one factory going.

Comedy in Mime

Then Laughter, holding both its sides, and painfully grimacing under the onslaught of property cream puffs, suddenly held its breath to see a pair of big splayed boots, trousers, a bowler hat and a cane syncopate their impudent and irresistible way while the world discovered Comedy in Mime. Charles Chaplin, the first great artist of the silent screen and the only one to keep its peace, was bred on the English music-hall stage. He is still far and away the greatest of all screen actors and the only legitimate reason for ever permitting the cinema to subsidise the theatre—as a thank-offering. Then suddenly someone thought of Thought, and everyone was stumped. Nobody had thought of thinking in those days. They had simply Gone After Things in a Big Way. Sometimes, alas, they had Got what they had Gone After. What in hell did Thought look like? And everyone wore a puzzled frown. So Thought, in the form of a puzzled frown, made its bow on the screen. For years and years film actors frowned and puckered their brows and looked slightly constipated and you just knew they were thinking.

Face-pulling gradually gave place to something even more dangerous—the Art of Facial Expression. A popular post-war encyclopedia had a page of photographs illustrating this. Love, Hate, Fear, Doubt, Grief, and so on. It was a good example of its own futility; you cannot label these emotions any more than you can learn them by imitation. Once the titles were covered up the fun began! At a guess, Doubt looked perilously like Love; Grief—just acute disappointment; Fear merely surprise, and I should be accused of extreme vulgarity were I to tell you what Hate looked like. That is why few of the old silent pictures can stand the test to-day; we find them unconvincing and often extremely funny.

A face helps

There is no such thing as Facial Expression, but there is such a thing as an expressive face. An expressive face helps to convey by natural means the messages of the artist's heart and mind; *helps*—but it cannot tell the whole story. Witness the celebrated wooden-faced comedian who, for some lamentable and apparently unaccountable reason, seldom makes pictures nowadays. Until he arrived, who would have believed that anyone could have achieved screen fame by the deliberate avoidance of facial expression? It is the eyes and the voice that matter most.

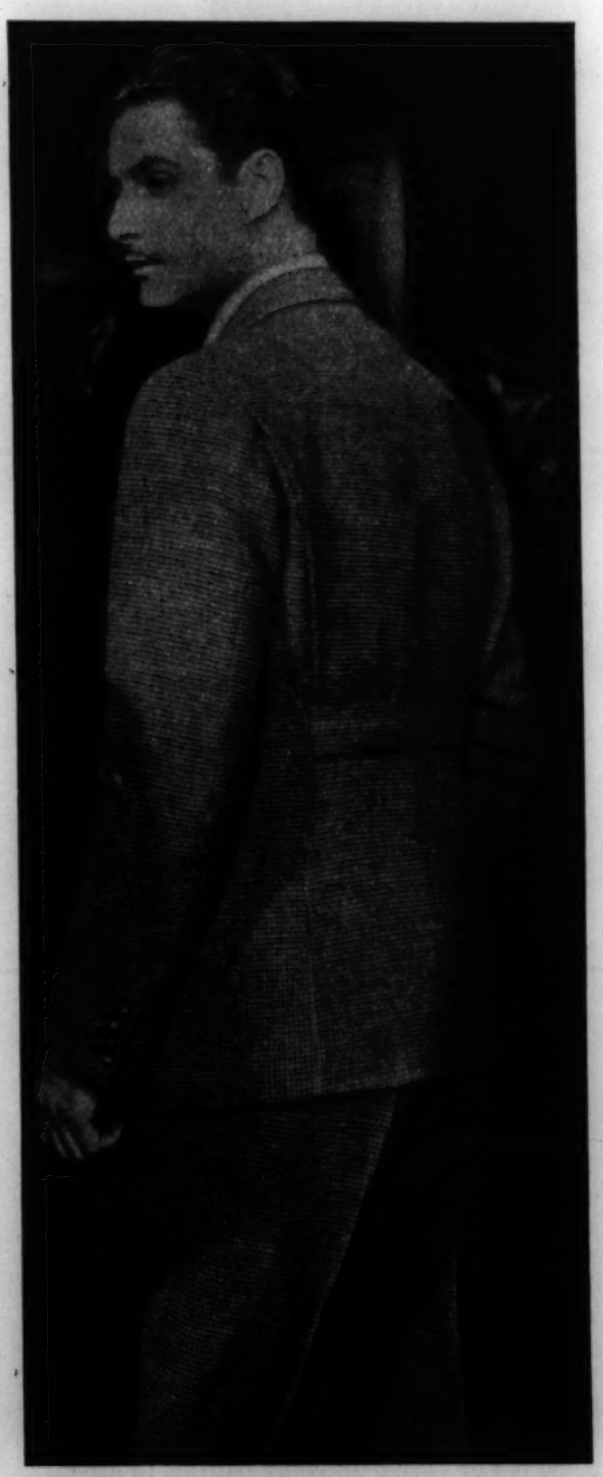
"Facial" expression is only skin deep; it is superficial and therefore insincere. Your bad actor (invariably a lazy one) visualises surprise, for example, in terms of lifted eyebrows, quivering nostrils, parted lips and popping eyes . . .

Just as face-pulling twisted the silents, voice-pulling distorted the talkies—though not for long, for the very good reason that having been forced into the paths of sincerity nothing but sincerity of voice would match. Thus, by the time mechanical improvements had eliminated the tin fog-horn, the all-screeching, all-crooning, all-canoodling voice had disappeared . . .

How much further have we travelled since those days? Not so very far, really. It is true we have anchored the camera and put a faster and more delicate motor inside it and more sensitive film in the spools, and we have given the cameraman a host of novelties to play with and more suitable backgrounds to light; but fundamentally the cinema has given us nothing more than the longshot, the medium shot and the close-up, plus the variations, that a mobile camera can play.

The technical advances of the cinema simply pay tribute to the age-old leadership of craftsmen in every art. It is always the craftsmen who achieve things. Only the competitive stresses of a great industry could have produced such giant technical strides. The craftsmanship of the chemical laboratory and the camera factory is no whit less highly skilled than the craftsmanship of the medieval wood-carver. The technique of the gear cutter and lens-maker puts the technique of the average actor to shame. I believe it was Sir Nigel Playfair who once said that if the theatre gave him an occasional success and an occasional cigar, what more could one expect or deserve? Must we belittle the cinema because its craftsmen can sometimes afford champagne as well?

We do not really begin to progress until we have the courage to admit and define our limitations; it is futile to pretend they do not exist. The film did not begin to realise its own possibilities until it began to forget them. Then it started throwing away its backgrounds, its crowds, its gorgeous palaces. Something more important had arrived—the scenario, or film story. Ever since that discovery we have simply been trying to tell the story better. Because the film apparently succeeded in doing the things that the stage only pretended to do, it tried to dispense with the arts of pretence altogether. Now it knows better. More and more it is finding its own level in the studio. There, the imitation can be photographed to look more convincing than the real—a paradox discovered by the theatre ages ago. Its great failing is its dangerous plasticity; it lends itself so readily to interfering fingers.



"*The Thirty-Nine Steps.*"

Two-feature Programme mixes

"Six-Shooters" and Shakespeare

"TWO big feature films—three and a half hours of Entertainment." Analysed, it will often be found that the "two big feature films" consist of one film worthy of the name and another that fulfils its function of doubtful value by supporting the main attraction; the three and a half hours are there all right, but whether this time is taken up by Entertainment is very much open to question.

There is obviously prevalent in the Cinema industry, a curious mentality which construes quantity as being far more satisfactory than quality. Assuming that "the patron is always right" let us look at his side of the question.

I particularly wish to see *Romeo and Juliet*, and so, having paid my nimble shilling I am ushered into a darkened auditorium where I am immediately credited by a flattering management, with a mentality so flexible that it will allow of my instantaneously adapting myself to the sudden change from the outer world of realities to the lavishly embellished world of illusion.

Unfortunately for me, I find that I have been plunged right into the middle of that atrocity of atrocities, the second feature, and before I am to be allowed to enjoy that which I seek, I must endure some forty-five minutes or more of Zane Grey. Being entirely unaware as to just how long I must suffer this curious form of preparation for Shakespeare, the minutes punctuated with "O.K., Boss," and "Sharp and snappy on the draw," not only seem like hours, but enhance my sense of frustration. Fidgety and with my sense of flattery utterly vanished, I feel in no mood to absorb Shakespeare and when at last the long-awaited title is blazened upon the screen, (without a second's interval dividing the fade-out of Zane Grey and the fade-in of Shakespeare), I am ill at ease, more especially as in the first two or three minutes I have to rise from my seat and allow some ten or twelve outgoing patrons to leave.

The leaders of the rival houses shake hands and Shakespeare fades out, after demanding my concentration for over two hours. But, wait, what's this,——oh! without a moment's pause, Zane Grey is back again, and Shakespeare's King's English gives way to the strains of "I'm an old Cow Hand" played and sung by a group of what the screen tells me are "Hill Billies." The strain being too great I leave my seat and the obliging young man who has been responsible for my physical (but not mental) safety during the past three hours, informs me that I should have been in his theatre for three and a half hours, had I stayed to see the programme through.

I cannot imagine anyone wishing to read for three and a half hours, turning to the middle of a Zane Grey novel, leaving the final page, and taking up his Shakespeare which he finds far more to his taste. Shakespeare finished, he finds that he has thirty-five minutes of the period he set himself to spend in reading, so he again takes up his Zane Grey, and reading from the first page to the place where he previously commenced, rises satisfied that he has taken up the allotted time.

The cinema magnates will tell you that they endeavour to cater for all tastes. A very desirable, if difficult, aspiration—but why be so foolish as to believe themselves capable of achieving this object at one and the same time. What do I find, hundreds of would-be patrons for Paul Robeson, kept away from a local cinema, because the programme also includes a second feature starring Joe E. Brown. This, dear friends, is what is known by those highly paid Cinema Executives as "balance." The Joe E. Brown seekers are not a bit interested, in fact they are appalled at the thought of spending one hundred minutes with Robeson as a wait for their particular fancy.

Surely this form of programme building cannot be adhered to much longer—if it is, I shall not be surprised to find those responsible for the control of the "Queen's Hall" balancing their pro-

Controversy rages over two-feature marathon programmes.

1937 Bernstein Questionnaire returns show majority of cinemagoers in favour. American Investigation reveals opinion changing over to favour one full-length feature only.

Hector McCullie, managing-director of Suburban Entertainments, Ltd., tells here of experience when visiting cinema to see *Romeo and Juliet.*

grammes with Sir Henry Wood and Miss Nellie Wallace, the latter supplying the light relief calculated to make the programme attractive to all classes.

The practice of running continuous performances from 1.30 p.m. to 11 p.m. is more condemnable than commendable. The cinema controller will tell you that it allows patrons to walk in at any time convenient to themselves. The cinema is thus accessible to patrons throughout the day. It also allows the cinema to present that type of entertainment that has become so standardised: "Two big feature films—three and a half hours of entertainment."

How much more enjoyable would it be for the patron to be able to attend a separate performance of a film he really had a desire to see, and enter the theatre knowing that he would have five or ten minutes in a fully illuminated auditorium to become properly prepared to absorb entertainment by allowing the proper environment and atmosphere of eager anticipation to saturate the mind he has just brought in from the outer world of realities. The patron at a continuous performance sub-consciously takes the performance for granted—he has a knowledge that "this sort of thing was going on for three hours before I came in and will continue to go on not only while I am in here, but for three hours after I have gone—the operators and staff have got to be here, this performance is only part of the game."

Curiously enough, in country and smaller provincial towns where life is not so much taken up by long journeys to and from work-a-day occupations, where life is easier and more hours of leisure available, the one performance per evening and the single feature programme is common. With the experience of controlling country cinemas, I can definitely state that the appreciation of the cinema patron who enters the cinema in an atmosphere charged with the curious expectation of the lights going out, coupled with the fact that the programme consists of a feature film really worthy of the name supplemented with a newsreel, cartoon film, and interest "short", is far higher than that of the patron who leaves his big city cinema, satiated and mentally confused by a surfeit of films good and bad.

It is remarkable, that whilst lavish care and attention has been paid to making the patron physically comfortable (which he needs be for the long-sitting he is expected to endure), little or no attempt has been made to cater for his mental comfort.

The three-and-a-half-hour patron leaves the theatre so overwhelmed by concentrating upon the screen for so long, that instead of being refreshed he is weary in mind and senses. Unlike the two-hours patron, who finds time and inclination to attend the cinema twice a week, he has had enough for a fortnight. And so, the highly-paid cinema executives have brought into being a "spoilt child" who, instead of asking for "more," finds the portions so large as to induce a very uncomfortable feeling within.

I still have enough faith and confidence in the public to believe that they would prefer to be offered "quality" rather than "quantity."

"Clean up" cinemas by:

(1) *Providing a maximum programme time of two and a quarter hours.*
(2) *Abolish the "second feature," which at present dubiously justifies its existence as an occupier of time.*
(3) *Abolish the continuous performance system, and institute one, two or three separate performances according to circumstances.*

The economic advantages of these reforms must be appreciated by those in control. Producers would have more incentive to make entertaining quality films rather than "second feature" time-fillers for which there would be no market. Renters would be securing a share of the proceeds for one good film as against one good film and a poor one which they either now supply or make a monetary allowance for. Cinemas would find that with such programmes they would reach a hitherto "untapped" audience, and the overhead expenses of operating their theatres would benefit by not running afternoon matinees at ridiculously low admissions to sparsely occupied seats.

Empty seats

I wish someone would start to-night. I have just been round to my local cinema, intending to enjoy Richard Tauber, but before passing the box-office, the lurid publicity informed me that a gentleman called "Schnozzle" Durante was "supporting" him. I am not clear whether Tauber was supporting "Schnozzle" or *vice versa*, but I was interested to have it explained to me by my young manager friend, the "wisdom" that prompted Mr. Durante being included to "satisfy everyone and provide the 'necessary' light relief."

The "wisdom" was responsible to-night for quite a number of persons including myself, allowing Herr Tauber to display his admirable talents to empty seats that were meant to softly caress our haunches, whilst our minds and senses received refreshment and satisfaction.

FRANK CAPRA

FRANK CAPRA deduces that British pictures have a market abroad, particularly in America, because he has seen queues waiting to get in to *Henry VIII* in dozens of small towns in the United States.

"It is plain enough they want to see *British* pictures," he said, "so why do you make copies of Hollywood films? You must have a Mr. Deeds of your own. He's a real American."

"We have," I told him, "but, you see they don't frequent the places where the magnates go to lunch."

"That's all part of your amateur attitude. You think a palace of a studio makes for good pictures. It doesn't take anyone in who knows the business. Why the only studio that's consistently failed in Hollywood is the beauty—marble halls and swimming pools. It has been changing hands all the time.

"Pictures aren't a snob business, they're entertainment, and," he settled himself deeper into his chair, "if you want to say something serious once in a while, then do it through comedy or fairy tale, anything but the pulpit attitude. Look at Disney."

He began to talk about *Lost Horizon.* He thought he had made plenty of faults in it. He looks upon it as an experiment and he was annoyed because the French office had cut out ten of the most important minutes; the main crux of the discussion between Conway and the Lama and also where Maria became an old woman.

"They don't think it's pretty! Well, it's the last of my pictures that'll be shown in France!"

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FIVE FILMS

by John Grierson

THE MOST CURIOUS result of the quota war has been the new orientation in British film values. Before it, our eyes were focused on Denham and the "bigs." To-day, the big pictures, like the dinosaurs, appear to be too big to be economic and are heading for extinction. We are all interested now in what can be done with £50,000. With the Board of Trade talking of £15,000—we are even interested in what can be done with £12,000. The record of these cheaper pictures is a lot better than the more pretentious ones. I do not mean better in production values but better in essence.

Who could not put production value—if you mean fine camera work and fine settings and expensive stars—into a picture costing a couple of hundred thousand? It would be difficult to avoid it. But without any pretensions to such values, some of the cheaper pictures have a vitality which the luxury ones lack. My theory is that this vitality comes almost invariably from the English music-hall, and that this is true British Cinema's only contact with reality. I cite names like Will Hay, George Formby, Jack Hulbert. I include Ralph Lynn and Tom Walls, who are not far away. I even include Charles Laughton, who, although he might not be happy to appear in this galley, is still within the vulgar tradition. His *Henry the Eighth* is none other than our old friend, "Henry the Eighth I am, I am"; and so, for that matter, is Charles himself. Now one hears that Douglas Wakefield has been added to the list of successes in a film called *Penny Pools*, which cost £5,500 and was made by the Mancunian Film Corporation in Manchester.

GEORGE FORMBY in *Feather Your Nest* typifies the tradition. Directed by William Beaudine, an American director of the older school, the film is of average efficiency only, moving slickly, but without that especial neatness which characterises the work of say Capra and McCarey. Formby, leaning out of the window, emits the gag that was written in for him—closes the window—finish. Capra, one imagines, or Hitchcock or McCarey, would have added some touch or other of self congratulation on the repartee to give the scene a final flourish. But the essence is there and Formby has brought it from the music-hall, from that contact with common people across the footlights, which the music-hall comedian must have or perish.

Gracie Fields, as a brilliant analysis in this paper once said, is simply the smart girl of any Saturday night sing-song in proletarian England, the girl with the sob in her voice, the fancy notes and the life of the party. George Formby is an equally familiar character. He is the clumsy, diffident, yet smartish young man who can play a mandolin, do a do-da song, and get in a snappy bit of cheek when the boss is not around and the inhibitions are off. He is also, more pathetically, the young man for whom a five shilling rise comprises one entire side of existence and fear of the sack, fear of his mother-in-law, fear of failure in his instalments, comprise the other. He is that curious slave of our modern civilisation for whom the public life is totally a personal one: essentially one might say, a figure composed of small hopes and large fears. Both the hopes and the fears are so common to a large majority of his audience that it is no wonder that his comedy releases them—the comedy of the teetotaller in love with the publican's daughter, the clumsy and fearful young man among the delicacies of recording apparatus, which in accepted sub-normality he could never hope to understand, the love-sick young couple in the jerry-built house, etc.

But if near to common experience—and to be honoured for that—the level of experience is obviously not deep. One has only to compare the social anarchy implicit in the Marx Brothers, the doctrine of original impotence implicit in Laurel and Hardy and the poor man against the sky of Chaplin, to see how much further our film comedy must go before it "rates." One supposes that our comedy will not rate cinematically until it rates philosophically. Formby is a good performer—natural and unmannered—but he lacks something in comic line. Comic line derives directly from idea.

I HAVE FOUND two other films worth recording. As an exercise in fast comedy, I recommend *Love is News*, directed by Tay Garnett and produced by Darryl Zanuck. This story of a young millionairess (Loretta Young), tortured by reporters and getting her own back on one of them, is well done. Examine particularly the freshness and the speed of the comedy ideas. It illustrates as well as any film the American capacity for invention—that invention which used to be distinguished in the schools from imagination. America has probably more of it than any people since Renaissance Italy.

Feather Your Nest

An A.T.P. film, directed by William Beaudine, with George Formby and Polly Ward

Love is News

A 20th Century-Fox film, directed by Tay Garnett, with Tyrone Power and Loretta Young

Make Way for To-morrow

A Paramount Picture, directed by Leo McCarey, with Victor Moore and Beulah Bondi

MORE IMPORTANT, there is Leo McCarey's film *Make Way for To-morrow*—the most brilliantly directed and acted film of the year. The story is the essentially sentimental one of an old couple who become a nuisance to their grown-up family; but so, for that matter, was *King Lear* sentimental. The great thing about the film is McCarey's handling of the players. We have not seen for a long time such a demonstration of what directorial control can mean to the art of acting. How much is McCarey will be revealed if you analyse any single situation; for example the old lady putting in a long-distance call to her husband. It is a difficult conversation for the sentiments of the old become, by emphasis, easily unreal. Yet McCarey gives delicacy and even something of tragedy to it, and it is done visually in the isolation he creates for the figure with his cameras. Robert Donat tells me that he was dumbfounded by the acting in this piece and I remember how a similar tribute was paid to McCarey by Charles Laughton after the production of *Ruggles of Red Gap*. My own view is that McCarey is a director's director, and the finest of all directorial craftsmen in Hollywood to-day. Like so many other able men, he derives from the school of Mack Sennett.

REVIEWED

and Basil Wright

The Black Legion

A Warner Bros. film, directed by Archie Mayo, with Humphrey Bogart and Dick Foran

Call it a Day

A Warner Bros. film, directed by Archie Mayo, with Ian Hunter, Alice Brady, Frieda Inescourt, Roland Young, Olivia de Havilland, Peggy Wood and Anita Louise

AFTER Sacco and Vanzetti, Scottsboro', the Texas school explosion, and the perennial lynchings, we are justified in believing almost anything about the U.S.A. *The Black Legion*, following Warner Bros.' usual policy of telling the world about the lice on the Stars and Stripes, is no more incredible than the newspaper paragraphs we read so often and the well documented case histories of the Klu Klax Klan. If the patriotism of local boneheads graduates via the ceremonial of a secret society to the full regalia of Fascist sadism, why worry? It's a story, and the public likes to see a bit of brutality now and then. Look at *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

Humphrey Bogart is of course in the lead (he must be the busiest man in Hollywood since there was a slump in Karloffs) and because he can act he pulls a messy film together and jerks some life into it. It's tough-going for him at first, because he has to be a nice respectable family man, with ambitions for the wife and kid, and it's difficult to keep the dirty look out of a face so trained to out-and-out villainy. Being Bogart, he succeeds, smiles at his wife and buys things for his boy (the only figure in the film who really deserves the attention of the Legion). But when, against all precedent, he misses promotion to foremanship at the factory, and sees it go to a brilliant young engineer who happens to be a Pole (though naturalised)—well, what could be more natural than to join up with some pals who want America for the Americans?

Initiation ceremonies, all hoods and cross-bones, sweep him on the tide of a blood-curdling oath of allegiance to the mass beating-up of the Pole, and the Bogart face can slip back to normal for the rest of the film. He proceeds by easy stages to the murder of his best friend, squeals on his fellow legionaries, and departs with them all on a life-sentence. Close-up of wife, and fade-out.

Let us not omit to record a sententious speech by the Judge summing up the principles of American democracy and quoting extensively from Abraham Lincoln, while the audience, realising the horrors are over, gropes for its hat and coat.

While Bogart is on the screen the film is worth watching—but outside that it's just the same old fundamental mistake as turns up in *You Only Live Once*. There ought to be a moral but there isn't; except the general one that it doesn't pay to use violence on an unofficial basis. *Black Legion* would be a better shocker if it didn't pretend to be a social document; and that it does so pretend is pretty well indicated by an opening title disclaiming any reference to actual persons or events. Anyhow, it ought to go down well at Berchtesgaden.

HORROR film number two is *Call It a Day*. Here we have a clever little play glorifying the cheaper dreams of London's suburbia, rolled out flat in Hollywood and served up again lukewarm with a relish of good production values and a couple of "Punch" jokes. The suburban home—magically transferred to Mayfair as all suburban homes would like to be—is badly hit by the sentimental glamour of Primavera. The little girl goes nuts about Dante Gabriel Rossetti, her

Make Way for To-morrow (Paramount)—reviewed on opposite page

elder sister falls madly in love with an artist, the son and heir wants to go touring abroad but is side-tracked by the blonde next door (who has a sports car), and Pa and Ma severally consider (in the nicest way of course) the pros and cons of infidelity, decide against it, and are left holding hands between the twin beds while a caged songbird suggests things at the moonlit window (in the nicest possible way of course).

NOW MANY thousands of pleasant people live in the suburbs, and they should arise and protest against this presentation of themselves as a lot of whimsical seconds in a Fragrant Minute. They should explain that they would be very unhappy if their dreams came true, and that in any case they don't really mean anything by that sort of dream. They should point out that the characterisation right through the film is about as convincing as the pre-war General Omnibus and the bogus French Taxi which Hollywood proudly presents as existing in modern London. And when they have done all this they can ask the critics to explain gently to the producers that they'd do much better to stick to pictures of contemporary life in America, and leave it to the English film industry to avoid making anything so unreal about England as *Call It a Day*. Meantime, we may fear that English audiences will inject themselves vigorously with this particular drug, and remark, as did a lady in the circle at the New Gallery, "But my dear it *must* be an English film. There isn't a trace of an American accent." Yes, lady, they all speak good English because a lot of them come from England—but just that doesn't make it an English film; ask Mr. Korda.

Reviews of films by John Grierson and Basil Wright will be a regular feature of World Film News.

FROM MONMOUTH TO MOVIES

Lyme Regis not Movie-mad says Richard Carr

THE cinema is not a vital element in the leisure-time of Lyme Regis people. In this little sea-town, described by Macaulay as a "small knot of steep and narrow alleys, lying on a coast, wild, rocky and beaten by stormy seas," neither young nor old are movie mad; the cinema seem comparatively unimportant.

* * * *

Lyme was once an important town in the West, a wool and weaving centre and a seaport doing a considerable trade in wines and tobacco. Its industry and commerce made it a stronghold of puritanism. In the Civil War it stood out for Parliament when all the West, save Poole, was held by the Royalists, resisting siege by Prince Maurice of the Rhine for two months. It stood strongly for Protestantism against the "Papists," for Parliament against Absolutism.

The strength of its opinions were again shown when Monmouth made his bid for the throne of England in the name of the Protestant religion. He landed at Lyme and a large part of the town's male working population marched out with him. They were marched aimlessly around Somerset until, armed only with scythes and staves and rough swords, they were slaughtered at Sedgemoor or taken to grace the gibbets of the Bloody Assize.

This was the last event of national importance in the history of Lyme. From then on its chronicles tell of decline in its industries. But the people held stubbornly to their opinions and, in a smaller way, went on fighting for them.

Out of centuries of such struggle its people achieved a character and strength of their own. It is written all over the counties of Dorset and Devon, this struggle and its later phase, the struggle against squire and parson is mutely testified by the scores of chapels, around the right to build and to worship in which many a bitter fight waged. And, in the nineteenth century, Dorset gave to trade unionism its most celebrated martyrs.

* * * *

To-day Lyme is a seaside resort, small, and, as such places go, unimportant. Its past gives it and its people a character not to be found at the popular seaside resort: the film of the Monmouth Rebellion, once proposed but banned by authority, could be made in its streets, acted and spoken by its people; and with scarcely a change in clothing would be more eloquent of the subject and the times than most of the expensive costume dramas of the studio. A great deal of the character remains; but its industries have gone. There is now but one important industry: the direct or indirect catering for visitors and summer residents. The town reflects this change in its livelihood-making but slowly; it begins to cater slightly for the visitor. A pin-table amusement saloon has made a nervous appearance on the sea-front, but is regarded with heavy disapproval by the authorities, who, by banning the giving of prizes, have recently struck at the basis of its business. The one cinema in the town is soon to have a "luxury" companion.

* * * *

Lyme's one cinema is perched high on the sea wall, and in the winter rough seas swamp over the entrance giving many a patron a soaking. Films have been shown in this building for eight years; before then they were shown in the eighteenth century assembly rooms, now demolished. The present home of the movies was once the Volunteers' Drill Hall, a name which takes it well back into the nineteenth century. Then it served as a theatre. Underneath the cinema, in the high sea wall, are deep vaults, once Roman baths.

A visit to this cinema is a strange experience to anyone used to London "supers" and their audiences. It seats about three hundred. Its smallness, its setting—the queer old town, the rugged cliffs, and the sea breaking on the rocky shore beneath—make it seem most unreal. The audience too seemed apathetic to the films and certainly not willing to applaud or to praise. It being summer according to the calender, the audience was mixed: the sixpennies—right bang in the front and almost close enough to the screen to take part in the films—and the ninepennies, only a few rows behind, were occupied by local people, mainly young, though here and there a labouring man and his wife, dressed for the visit and clearly uncomfortably conscious of being at the cinema. In the one-and-threes and the balcony were visitors. The mixed nature of the audience made clear-cut impressions difficult.

All these facts, the setting, the smallness of the cinema, the audience, made a hard test for the films. Many of them seemed fantastic in these surroundings. The first, for example, was the magazine-interest film. We were shown how champagne was made, from the field to the table; the latest fashions in women's clothes, some of the garments costing more apiece than many of these people earned in a twelvemonth; finally two young Americans climbing Monte Blanc, in great danger according to the commentator though this was by no means obvious. As the people of Lyme Regis live all their lives at an angle of forty-five degrees, or so it looks to a stranger, this climbing up and down must have seemed very commonplace. A *Secrets of Nature* film was next; it seemed to interest the swells greatly, but the front seats hardly at all. It was about seagulls, again hardly a novelty to the locals.

Then the newsreel. This is bad enough when one sees it in London, sandwiched in a long programme, but here its triviality seemed outrageous. It was all Royalty and parades with one of the usual obscure and meaningless motor-bike-races-round-the-houses thrown in. It brought nothing of the events pounding the world to pieces, nothing of the happenings and men of our day. Its dullness and uselessness was never so striking as in this place where real, vital news of the outside world could mean so much.

The main feature film in the first half of the

From Monmouth to Movies *(contd.)*

week was *Men of Yesterday*. This film was not well liked on its London showing, being condemned for its sentimentality. It was a film about the efforts of ex-servicemen to promote peace by giving a dinner to ex-servicemen from allied and ex-enemy countries. It had all the faults of this conception and all the features of the ex-servicemen's appeal and movements. It was overwhelmingly sentimental and, set against the stream of world events, its solution of the war problem seemed astonishingly trivial and foolish.

Yet it made some impression. It had an uncomfortable sincerity; the people were more real than is usual in British films. It was about ex-servicemen and they were very much like ex-servicemen. There were no stars, apart from the almost forgotten Stewart Rome and a short appearance by George Robey. It was obviously liked, though this liking was tempered by the objection to war films which, it seems, is as strong here as elsewhere.

I give these impressions for what they are worth because it is almost impossible to find out what people here like or dislike in films. The box-office does not show it, save in rare cases; the people express few opinions, occasionally one or two will say the film was bad. The first show decides the attendance on the next two evenings; opinions are reported among friends, work-mates and neighbours. The fantastic and far-fetched are not popular. Neither is the educational. Musical films are; *Rose Marie* was one of this year's successes. The other was *Mutiny on the Bounty*, which did great business.

Other films which have done fairly well this year have been: *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, *Strangers on Honeymoon*, *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *The Three Maxims*, *When East Meets West*. In so far as attendance provides any sort of guide here, George Arliss has some following, as have the Lynn-Walls team. War films are as unpopular here as elsewhere; educationals are disliked; "near the knuckle" films frowned upon; Westerns and action pictures fairly popular with the men; musicals with the women.

* * * *

In the summer the cinema gets a great deal of its support from visitors; in the winter it depends on the local people. It is the only form of amusement for winter evenings in this town, but during the winter there is a great deal of unemployment. The money earned in the short summer season has to be eked out over the long winter and visits to the cinema are therefore few and far between for most. Through the winter the cinema does a fair business, but very rarely indeed does it have to turn people away, small though the seating capacity be.

It must be remembered too that the intense interest in pictures, fed by the "fan" magazines, by the press reviews and stories, has little effect here—the number of films that can be seen is limited. With one cinema there is no choice. Film papers are something which the local people do without. The reviews of the films in the Press, even the "current release" reviews are useless to these people, for only a small—and not always the best — part of the releases ever reach them and then only long after the reviews have appeared.

Allowing for all these factors; for the poor selection opportunity, for the smallness of the cinema, for the poverty of the people over the greater part of the year, the comparative unimportance of the movies here is not completely explained.

The truth is that, though it has been in and around Lyme for many years, the cinema has not driven itself into the lives of these people as it has done in the towns. The only leisure-time entertainment for the young in the rough winters it is not a vital part of their lives. Perhaps it is as important to them as it was to most people twenty years ago; a way of passing an evening, a place to go to, a chance to see places, people and events occasionally. They live under conditions that have changed but little in external environment; they are tied to ways of life and of thought much more than are the young in the towns.

It should be emphasised too that there is a community of life and of interest in places like Lyme which is not found in the towns. Chapel-going, the gossiping in the streets and in the neighbour's house—in the quiet, warm summer evenings the streets are alive with groups of men and women gossiping—and a common dependance upon summer "lets." Life in these places is harder, more in contact with natural dangers, more built around the seasons and the tides, more bound up with the past, its thinking and living, and less affected by the new and the novel, than in the urban district.

In any case much of the youth is drawn away to brighter employment prospects in neighbouring towns; those left find their occupation around the parasitical job of providing for visitors. Yet these people have a character and strength that prevents them from ever becoming a race of boarding-house keepers. If they ever get the cinema-going habit, not any film will get by. Circumstances, environment, plus a deeply critical nature, a hatred of artifice and showyness—these factors will prevent the movie which is unreal and false being successful among these people.

An open letter to the gentleman who says "Oh Yeah?"

6 Tower Hill,
E.C.3.
20*th July*, 1937.

SIR,

You say you cannot see the point of making pompous and bland announcements in the press to the self-satisfied effect that our publication is better than so-and-so's.

The advent of a new publication for the cinematograph industry in the form of CINEMA MANAGEMENT some four months ago, was one which not only aroused interest but caused much sceptical comment.

Obviously the possibilities for the successful production of a new publication for the cinema industry was a matter of considerable conjecture. Several efforts have been made in the last few years but the right angle never seemed to be struck.

After only four months of life, CINEMA MANAGEMENT is rapidly becoming a valuable mouthpiece for the independent producer, renter and exhibitor whose aims and efforts it cultivates and fosters.

CINEMA MANAGEMENT can and will continue to progress, it will give information which will be of interest to all connected with the film business. If you have not already seen this publication send 2*d.* in stamps for a free copy.

Your remarks whether appreciated or otherwise will be welcomed. Every consideration will be given to suggestions and queries will be answered both promptly and efficaciously—our password is "Efficient Service."

Yours truly,
The Editor,
Cinema Management.

PIPE DREAMS

"Chaplin wanted to play Napoleon . . . "

"I Talk of Dreams"

RECENTLY I wrote an article called "Cinema Utopia" (quoted in *W.F.N.*, April), in which I suggested a group of novels and themes, which, under certain directors and with certain stars, would make, in my opinion, ideal movies.

This might be construed as an idle pastime. "Hollywood doesn't day-dream"—the cynic will say, "Hollywood *does!*"

But sometimes, Hollywood "*doesn't!*"—For all kinds of reasons. Often, plans for films are announced, casts and directors assembled, and then, suddenly, the whole thing is thrown into discord. Not because it wasn't a good idea in the first place—but because someone in the office remembered that Ohio and Pennsylvania would never pass it, or that a certain foreign government might object, or for one of an unlimited number of other reasons, each more esoteric than the other. Added to which are the secret dreams and desires of certain stars and directors to do things—specific things—they know they could do superlatively well, but which must remain frustrations because the studio executives "know what the public wants"—and that is usually that!

"Which are the Children of an idle Brain"

For example.

What ever became of Robert Flaherty's projected film of the American Indian? That Irish poet of the camera who mirrored the tropics so poignantly in *Moana* and (with Murnau) in *Tabu* planned to make a film in New Mexico for Fox on the Indian Reservations there. It would have done for the Indian what Flaherty did for the Eskimo in *Nanook* and the inhabitants of the Aran Islands in *Man of Aran*, namely, it would have been the epic of a race. But Fox never let Flaherty make it.

Sergei Eisenstein wanted to do Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* for Paramount when that company brought him over here. Dreiser was enthusiastic about his script. But the Hays office objected. The film was made by someone else and the whole point of the novel perverted. Then, Eisenstein planned another film for his American debut—an original story called *Glass Houses*, the moral of which was known to everybody, viz. "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." His idea was never approved by Paramount. How he subsequently went to Mexico, with private backing, to make *Que Viva Mexico!* an ethnic tragedy of the Mexican people which turned up in New York as the perverted *Thunder over Mexico*, is too well known now to be detailed here.

"Begot of nothing but vain fantasy"

Karl Freund, Ufa's ace cameraman, who was responsible for the fascinating photography for *The Last Laugh*, *Metropolis*, *Variety*, was brought here by Universal, and the first thing he wanted to do was a film of New York, after the manner of his famous *Berlin: The Symphony of a Big City*. It was never done. Freund turned to directing cheap shockers.

Metro bought the rights to Werfel's novel, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, which dealt with Turkish massacres in Armenia during the late holocaust (1914-18) in Europe. But the Turkish Government objected and threatened to boycott all MGM. pictures in Turkey if the novel were filmed. The investment in the novel was written off to profit and loss and the idea shelved. There will be no film of *Musa Dagh*.

Similarly, Paramount bought the rights to Humphrey Cobb's shocking exposé of conditions at the front in that same carnage, *Paths of Glory*, but this time the French government objected, since the villain in the book was a French general. Paramount desperately toyed with the idea of changing the locale to Czarist Russia and making the general a White Guard—no one could object to that, except a few expatriates in Paris and they didn't count. But it was no go, and another investment was lost.

As for *It Can't Happen Here*, everyone knows how almost every Fascist state in Europe objected to the filming of that story and how it was shelved and temporarily, at least, forgotten.

"Which is as thin of substance as the air"

Pudovkin, the great Soviet director, once wanted to do Zola's tremendous story of the mines, *Germinal*, but, for some reason, it never happened. Eisenstein got as far as a lengthy, detailed scenario on which he worked two years, which would have resulted in a Gargantuan film history of the city of Moscow, but he discarded the idea for mysterious

"Fox stopped Flaherty from filming the Red Indian"

OF LONDON & HOLLYWOOD

by Herman G. Weinberg

"Lorre wanted to make an anti-war comedy"

reasons to work on *Bezhin Meadow*, which he has almost completed now.

An announcement once appeared that Paul Muni would play Nijinsky, in a film based on the life of the Russian dancer, with Charles Laughton as Diaghilev. This would have made a splendid film. What happened?

"And more inconstant than the wind"

Erich von Stroheim, director of *Greed* and *The Merry Widow*, recently stated that he would like to film his novel, *Paprika*. The answer was the role of a spy in a French film which he went abroad to make. *Paprika* would have served to rehabilitate the greatest directorial talent of our time, but movies never do the obvious thing, even when the obvious thing is right.

"Laughton was to have made *The Field of the Cloth of Gold*"

G. W. Pabst, director of *Kameradschaft* and *The Beggar's Opera*, wanted to do a film in Italy on Spartacus, the slave driver. Mussolini said "No!"

Charlie Chaplin wanted to play Napoleon. So did Edward G. Robinson. Neither film was made.

Peter Lorre bought the rights to that delightful anti-war comedy from the Czech, *The Good Soldier Schweik*, hoping that someone would film the story and let him play the title role which he could do superbly. No one in Hollywood was interested. Instead, Lorre is offered such insultingly stupid roles as *Mad Love*, *Crack-Up*, etc.

Erich Wolf Korngold, the German composer, was brought to Hollywood by Warners to do the musical arrangement for *Midsummer Night's Dream*. When that was finished, he dreamed of doing a film on the life of Beethoven, with himself playing Beethoven. No one paid any attention to him. Edward G. Robinson was so vehement in also wanting to play Beethoven that he threatened to abrogate his contract if Warners didn't let him. They didn't let him.

"Sport with the ever restless mind of man"

Stokowski wanted to do a film on the life of Wagner, with himself as Wagner. He still wants to do it, but no one will back it. Instead, he is appearing in *The Big Broadcast of* 1937.

Jean Cocteau, the French poet, announced that he would do a new version of that old, silent shocker, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, which had all the aesthetes ga-ga a decade ago. Nothing came of it. Later, he and Chaplin promised to meet in Bali some day and do a film together. This will really be, as the boys in the back-room would say, "something!" if it ever happens, which it probably won't.

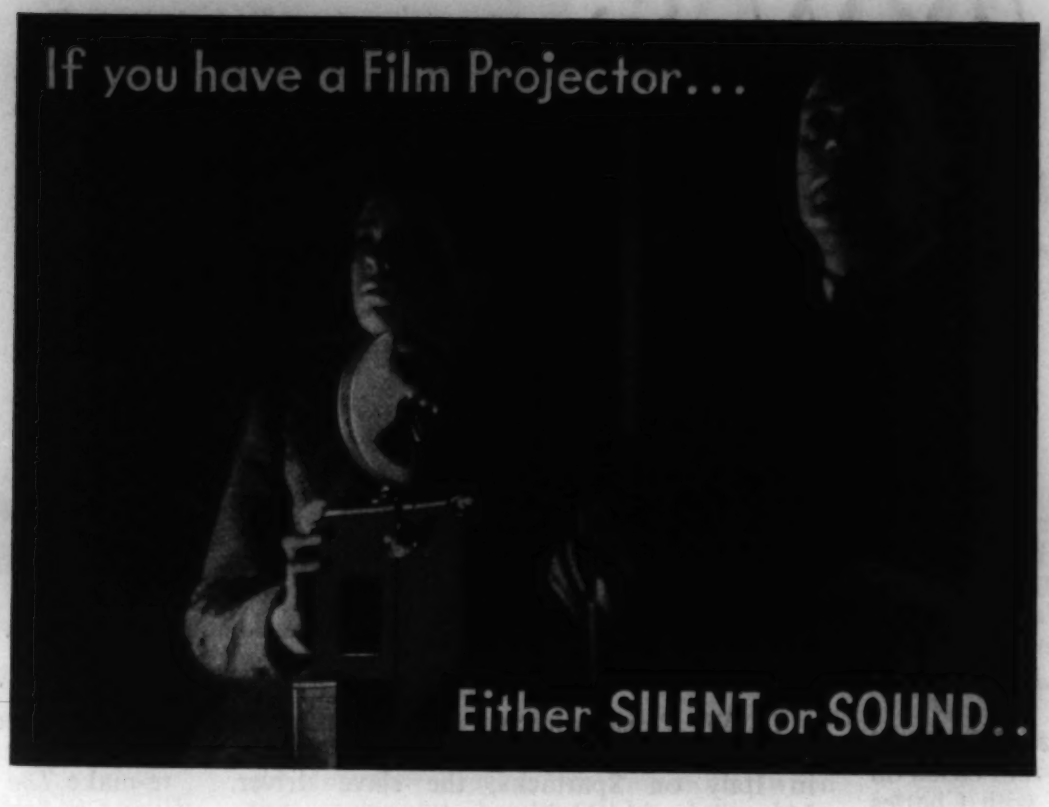
Korda announced *Field of the Cloth of Gold*, with Maurice Chevalier, Charles Laughton and a host of distinguished players in an historical film romance in the grand manner, but it was never made. For that matter, Universal once also announced that it would re-make *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* with Lon Chaney's role taken this time by Lorre. Another pipe-dream.

A friend of mine, Roman Freulich, director of a few experimental shorts, spent a whole afternoon, once, telling me how he would make a film of Robinson Jeffer's poem, *Roan Stallion*. To those who are familiar with this poem, idealism can go no further.

"Dreams are but interludes which fancy makes"

And, as if to keep up the noble tradition of movies and roles that never happened but should have happened, just the other day Bette Davis, bless her heart, announced that she would take a big part in the forthcoming Warner Bros. film on the life of Zola—if they would give her the bit she was dying to do—Nana.

" Pudovkin wanted to do Zola's *Germinal*..."



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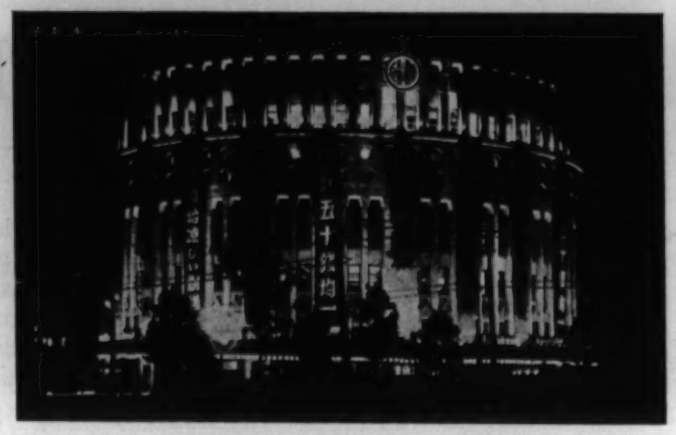
THE JAPANESE BENCHI

The Japanese "benchi" or commentator of the silent films developed a new art when talkies came in. He interweaves with the American dialogue sound effects and translation.

BY OSWALD M. WYND



A Modern Japanese Cinema

It is pleasant to upset Occidental complacency by stating emphatically that the Japanese had "talkies" long before the idea was even embryonic in the West. It must be admitted that the "sound" which accompanied the Japanese presentation of the earlier Hollywood films was not mechanical and only very slightly synchronised but for all that it was unquestionably efficient and effective.

When the silent picture with its English sub-titles began to gain popularity in Japan it became obvious that some effort would have to be made to aid Oriental comprehension of the thread of the film narrative. The experiment of adding Japanese characters beneath the printed English explanations was one of the first attempts to solve the problem but it was found that the brevity and "snappy" phrases largely relied on by the American producers of that time made adequate translation difficult. After numerous other methods had been tried one was evolved which made an instantaneous appeal to the cinema-going public and resulted in the appearance of a personage entirely unique in film history. He was the "benchi" or translator; an individual possessed of histrionic ability in the Japanese manner who very often proved to be a real artist in his own field.

I can recall all those silent Hollywood epics of the Cecil B. de Mille school made glorious by the wailings and palpitating enthusiasm of the "benchi." This gentleman by no means confined himself to merely reproducing dialogue but enlarged his function until he was practically the Japanese version of the cinema organ, holding in reserve a repertoire of noises which would unquestionably have embarrassed a Wurlitzer.

Silk-robed genius

Certain of the "benchi" were justly more famed than others and the most important Tokyo picture palace boasted an artist who had laboriously worked his way upwards from Suburbia; eventually, by dint of his virtuosity, finding himself able to demand a financial remuneration in keeping with his talent.

Although as an Occidental I was supposed to prefer the English sub-titles to the Japanese vocalisation, the mere dullness of the printed word had no chance of competing with the dramatic roarings of a silk-robed genius. I listened, as did most Europeans, to the "benchi" and discussed his respective merits with my friends much in the same way as now I might—if I were so inclined—argue about the acting ability of Sir Cedric Hardwicke.

A film, I think it was called *The Eleventh Hour*, remains fixed in my mind, not due to its excellence, but simply because on that occasion the "benchi" surpassed himself. There was a shot in the film of a submarine sinking and we were presented with photography of a tin model subsiding slowly to the bottom of a porcelain bath. The "benchi," appreciating the weakness of the film, realized that it was his duty to bolster up that limp production and so, bringing all the manifold aspects of his talent into play, he treated us to an absolute onslaught of sheer artistry. Each bubble which emerged from the synthetic wreck was accompanied by a most incredible assortment of desperate and horrible gurglings. The tin model sank, and we were harrowed by a symphony of aquatic noises interspersed with fiendish screams which suggested all too realistically the agony of dying men. That miserable fake shot became a stark reality and an obvious fraud was converted, for those of us in that Tokyo cinema, into a drama of vital intensity.

Threat of the talkies

The advent of talkies to the Orient thus brought more than a revolution in film technique, it threatened the security of a popular profession. It was impossible at first to imagine the translator competing with those brazen mechanical voices which were nearly always pitched at a volume certain to drown out even his most inspired efforts. Most of us, then—back in 1929 when the talkies really came to stay as far as Japan was concerned—sorrowfully relegated the "benchi" to a premature oblivion. It was the sudden extinction of a newly evolved mode of artistic expression; the driving forth of a talented individual whose shrill enthusiasm had enlivened many a dull film.

I can remember hearing and seeing the *Singing Fool* in Tokyo, and it awakened in me no feeling of excitement. I was not inspired by the tremendous force the talking picture might become, nor did I contemplate its possibilities in artistic and educative spheres. I was conscious of nothing save irritation towards that howling "mammy" expert who had drowned out our favourite with his enormous voice and was thus the murderer of art.

At first it seemed as if preserved sound had won a sweeping victory and it was not until talkies were apparently well established that the magnates of the film industry, in its Oriental branches, began to sense a popular rumble of protest. It was not difficult to find where the trouble lay. The novelty of hearing voices which jumped at one from the screen had worn off and the average Japanese, understanding little or none of the dialogue, was beginning to say very rude things about the tone of the Occidental voice—especially the Hollywood voice. Then, too, with the advent of the talking film action tended to slow down and it was no longer possible, as it had been during the days of the silent film, to follow the theme without printed aid. Japanese audiences were forced to endure long bouts of conversation which meant nothing to them and eventually they revolted. The cry went abroad,

"We want our 'benchi'."

A tentative trial of the "benchi" and the talking film in collaboration was one of the most interesting experiences I have ever had. The silk clad figure, conscious of the weight of popularity behind him, entered his little box near the screen and prepared to compete with Miss Chatterton.

The chaos which was generally anticipated did not result. The sound of the film was toned down to a reasonable point and the "benchi," while in opposition to the dialogue, never completely overpowered it or was in his turn overpowered. True artist that he was, in the supreme trial for his very professional existence, he triumphed. It was possible, if one were so inclined to listen entirely to the film dialogue, excluding completely from the conscious field of the sound of the translator but it was far more interesting to listen to the English, keeping all the while a certain awareness of the "benchi," so that when the picture became dull as it often did, one was able to switch over attention and listen to delightfully Oriental explanations of Occidental promiscuity.

Bleak Thursday

For the benefit of those who are particularly sensitive to the subtle competition between translator and talking picture, one day a week has since been set aside to be translatorless. This uninspiring time is largely patronized by Americans and Europeans who, due to the short time of their residence in Japan, or more often sheer lethargy, have failed to acquire sufficient Japanese to enable them to comprehend the "benchi," but those who appreciate the fine points of film-going in Japan avoid that bleak Thursday.

A return to Japan for me would unquestionably include the rare delight of hearing my old friend the "benchi" repelling successfully—by complex vocalisation—waves of those hackneyed inanities which pour forth from the sound track of so many screen epics.

WORLD OPINION —

"Audacious word-builders . . ."

It is possible to recognise a characteristic of American idiom, the gift of compressed metaphor, of crystallising in a phrase what was once perhaps an American custom or famous occasion. It is a common error to believe that Americans are fond of weird-sounding words which do not mean very much. Perhaps, at three thousand miles they mean only a sound to us, but they nearly always had in the beginning a very precise meaning. The Americans have very little interest in words merely for their sound; words like "swank" and "bally" and "blooming" are much more British than American. The American idiom is most recognisable in phrases which embody a formula for some notable incident or chance emotional experience. Even the compounds we have taken from them manage to pack a story into two words: for instance, "home-spun", "cross-purposes", "fool-proof", "horse sense", a "come-down". Naturally it was during the dizzy pioneer century, the nineteenth, that the American language came into its own, and then the American was discovering his gifts; a continental geography was showing him what trades and professions were to be typically his own. And there is scarcely a department of nineteenth-century American life which has not given to the language new words and idioms long passed into daily use in England. . . .

As the century moved along, American naturally added words in fields in which its people began to show a special aptitude—in engineering and medicine, for example. Perhaps the most moving coinage in American history is the record of the naming of anæsthesia' by Wendell Holmes and the young American doctor, W. T. Morton. The entries in the *Dictionary of American English* give all the emotion that the story needs. The first entry is a letter from Holmes to Morton, who had questioned him about a good word to describe the discovery. Holmes replied (this is 1846): "The state produced should, I think, be called 'anæsthesia'; the adjective will be 'anæsthetic'; the means employed will properly be called an 'anti-æsthetic agent,' but this admits of question." Not only the word but the practice admitted of question for twenty stormy years, and the next entry notes a meeting of Boston dentists called in 1865 "to make a formal protest against anæsthesia." The fate of the word and the benediction it described was sealed once for all by the grim requirements of the first modern war. The last entry, from *Harper's Magazine* for September, 1865, the last year of the Civil War, says simply: "Dr. Morton has attended the principal battle-fields administering anæsthetics with his own hands . . ."

These are only a few of the American sources from which we have received an endless number of idioms. For a century and a half we have taken them in from commerce, letter-writing, books, papers and now at a tremendous rate from the movies; a favourite and painless way has been to learn an Americanism which took the fancy of one of our writers. Burke was fond of "to advocate"; Dickens, who heard Cockney better than any man, and American probably worse than any man, brought back "loafer." Robert Louis Stevenson returned from California with a favourite word "shyster"; and the new Earl Baldwin once used before a placid House of Commons "best-seller", "back-slider" and "a party dog-fight." It is a wrong interpretation to say that Americans as such have a special gift for word-making. Maybe they have to-day, but the gift is common to all nations at a certain stage of their history. The nineteenth century was to America what the seventeenth century was to England. The seadogs of Britain had the same qualities as the pioneers of the United States who walked 3,000 miles and broke the prairie before the prairie broke them. Life was young and hard and exciting and vivid, and the people who lived it gave these qualities to the language they used. Well, the pioneer history is over. Americans can now span from coast to coast in thirteen hours, the extensive era is a memory, and her intensive history is already underway.

He would be a bold scholar who could say that America has reached the limit of her word-coining, because so long as there are minds to conceive such a mighty audacity as Boulder Dam there will be minds to invent new words as concrete and audacious. . . .

—Alistair Cooke, *The Listener*

"Imaginative, passionate Theatregoers . . ."

And so with the theatre in London and New York. Here it is a relatively simple matter to put on a play. All one needs to do is cast it, then call in any scene-designer one may fancy. From his sketches anyone with experience in building and painting stage-scenery can do your job, and see that it is delivered to the theatre.

Perhaps the producer will have a few headaches during the process, but as a rule the process of staging a play in London is quite sane, and partakes of the dignity to be found in most businesses. Possibly it is too easy. Never having strained himself emotionally, the producer often discovers his play as well-mannered as himself—and as dramatic as a cold kipper.

In New York, logically, the staging of a play is a prelude to a quiet rest in a mad-house. Little wonder that so many Broadway productions have a rough vitality missing in London offerings! Considering the conditions under which plays are staged in New York, it is a miracle that there are any offerings at all. The pace of metropolitan life, the noise, the competition, are enormously greater than in London. Naturally, a play must at least equal the pulse-beat of the city, if it is to appear even normally alive; and when, as in a crime melodrama, the action must be heightened, the pace of the play must be at machine-gun speed to achieve its effect.

But these are obvious facts, known to everyone, important as they are. From heartache comes achievement. If there is any quicker way to acquire cardiac trouble than putting on a Broadway show I don't know it.

What is the secret of New York's fertility? Year after year Broadway's managers cry that Hollywood finally has destroyed the legitimate theatre. And yet, somehow, every season, new faces appear, fine serious plays and sparkling comedies emerge.

Despite palatial new cinemas, the old, dependable theatre-audience returns to the Shubert, and Mansfield and Maxine Elliott playhouses. Night after night Lindy's, Jack Dempsey's, Caruso's, Sardi's and countless other restaurants on side streets off the Great White Way are jammed with people arguing over the merits and shortcomings of the evening's play. Their conversations are as serious as when they discuss world politics.

To these people, obviously, the theatre is more than mere amusement. Here, I think, is the truest explanation of New York's theatrical supremacy. To the Briton the theatre, essentially, is an escape. No city offers more delightful comedies or magnificently-staged musicals. High comedy, from the days of the Restoration to the modern times of Coward and Lonsdale, has been the pride of the London stage. Despite Shakespeare and other great writers of tragedy, the typical English play offers an escape from the humdrum business of living.

New York, on the other hand, is a violent sort of city—over a million people on Broadway every night; a vast wave of jostling humanity gathered from all parts of the world. London, for all her foreigners, is an English city. New York, despite her big business and skyscrapers, is not truly an American city. Hence its theatre is more international, drawing its stories from the crowded, motley streets, and its methods from everywhere.

It is a significant fact that New York's population includes some two and a half million Jews, and that the majority of producers and playgoers are Jewish. The theatre is in their blood, as in that of no other race: to such imaginative, passionate people the average Anglo-Saxon must appear a tame Milquetoast: and strong drama has a special appeal for this audience, as does the experimental method.

To sum up, the Londoner goes to the theatre to be amused; the New Yorker, more frequently to learn. Not that we do not have our frothy inconsequentials, and our pseudo-artistic failures, than which there is nothing so painful. But it is true that while London audiences shy away from the serious, New York's take a positive pleasure in witnessing morbidities. Perhaps our tastes are not as refined, but a larger percentage of our plays undoubtedly do possess the true dimensions of actuality.

—George Brandt, *The Evening News*

AMERICAN SURVEY

"Vigorous films against social abuses"

The greater concern of the American film with ordinary people and with the problems that arise in ordinary lives has been helped by the greater proneness of social relationships in the United States to explode into violence and by the more glaring unevennesses in the social structure. There are injustices and abuses in England, but they are neither so hideous nor so melodramatic as the "chain" gang and the third degree. Lynchings and murder, rackets and gun-play, are not the whole of life in the United States but they are a part of it, and it is long since the cinema first realised it.

But there is a new tone apparent in the American pictures of social wrongs and of individual misfortunes. A New Orleans correspondent of the *Era* complains that "the reform complex has hit the studios like a disease . . . things have come to such a pass that it is difficult to find an evening's entertainment in town, something to make you forget your troubles instead of getting all steamed up over other people's!" Although film production in America is big business, strongly concentrated in the hands of the Rockefeller and the Morgan clans, this documentary streak in the American cinema has become a radical one, anæmically radical perhaps if compared with the American novel, but radical nevertheless, and strongly so, for an entertainment with such social inhibitions as the cinema.

It is said that "Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" the theme song of Disney's *Three Little Pigs*, became the anti-depression anthem of the American people and that it did much to carry Roosevelt into office at the Presidential election before last, and it may be that the general popularity of Roosevelt and the New Deal is mainly responsible for such films as *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and for Paramount's new film *Make Way for To-Morrow*, which is described as an "exposition of the need for social security."

The films directed against various social abuses are more vigorous and brutal than these. *Fury*, *Mountain Justice*, *We Who are About to Die*, and other films have improved on the tradition of *Ten Thousand Years in Sing Sing* and *I am a Fugitive from a Chain-Gang*, and Mr. James Cagney and Mr. Paul Muni are two actors whose own strongly held personal views are tending to confine their activities to this type of film. *Winterset*, which had no racket to expose and was not noticeably tied down to social theory, was based indirectly on the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and probed far deeper into social injustice than English film makers apparently care to do. It is odd, incidentally, that all these films should be made in California, where Tom Mooney still languishes in gaol.

Some American critics have deplored this tendentiousness in the modern American cinema, and find, in fact, tendentiousness in strange places, complaining that *Mutiny on the Bounty* and *The Barretts of Wimpole Street* are films against dictatorships, and that *Lost Horizon* is Communist in tone. Audiences too have objected, but it is likely that here territorial sensitiveness is responsible. But American audiences as a whole must be willing enough to pay for *Gabriel Over the White House*, *Front Page*, *Black Legion*, and *I Promise to Pay*, or the business men who control production would take to more lucrative subjects.

It seems a pity that English films cannot deal so vigorously with vital subjects; such films must be "box-office propositions" in the United States, and the English film lacks both vitality and box-office appeal.

—The Times

BIG FILM DEAL
REAL BRITISH PITCHERS
Chiang-Kai-Shek Prince Monolulu, Leo Tolstoy, Father Divine and Mae West have been engaged to star in National Epic. The book is by a dead guy called Milton but Hank Spitz is putting it right.

Low's Comment on British Film-production (by courtesy of the* Evening Standard*)

Spike Hughes on America's George Gershwin

To my mind the famous "Rhapsody in Blue" was the least important piece of music Gershwin ever wrote, but it has a great significance in the life of our time.

To this day nobody quite knows where Gershwin's contribution to that piece left off and where the arranger's began.

Ferdie Grofé, you see, contributed largely to the success of the Rhapsody. He orchestrated it, he adapted it from Gershwin's skeleton conception; it is said that he composed many passages in it.

By ordinary standards the "Rhapsody in Blue" is not good music. Still less is it good jazz. Gershwin was not a composer of jazz; he was a song writer whose songs were written in a form which lent itself to dancing.

But between them Gershwin and Grofé succeeded in convincing the man-in-the-street that the "Rhapsody in Blue" was something out of the ordinary.

Modern music, you must remember, was, and still is, out of touch with the "ordinary" listener. Light music still had its public, but it was limited. A new generation, weaned on ragtime, found life a little flat, a little lacking in "pep."

The "Rhapsody in Blue" was just what they wanted, and they went for it.

Another thing that helped the popularity of the "Rhapsody in Blue" was that it was one of the few pieces of music played by larger orchestras than the listeners could remember.

It was full of "tunes." That is to say, it was full of easily remembered snippets of melody—one bar, two bars in length, which is about as much as the average listener can remember these days . . . .

He convinced Broadwayites and their prototypes all over the world that they were listening to "sophisticated" art, and that jazz had at last acquired some æsthetic standing.

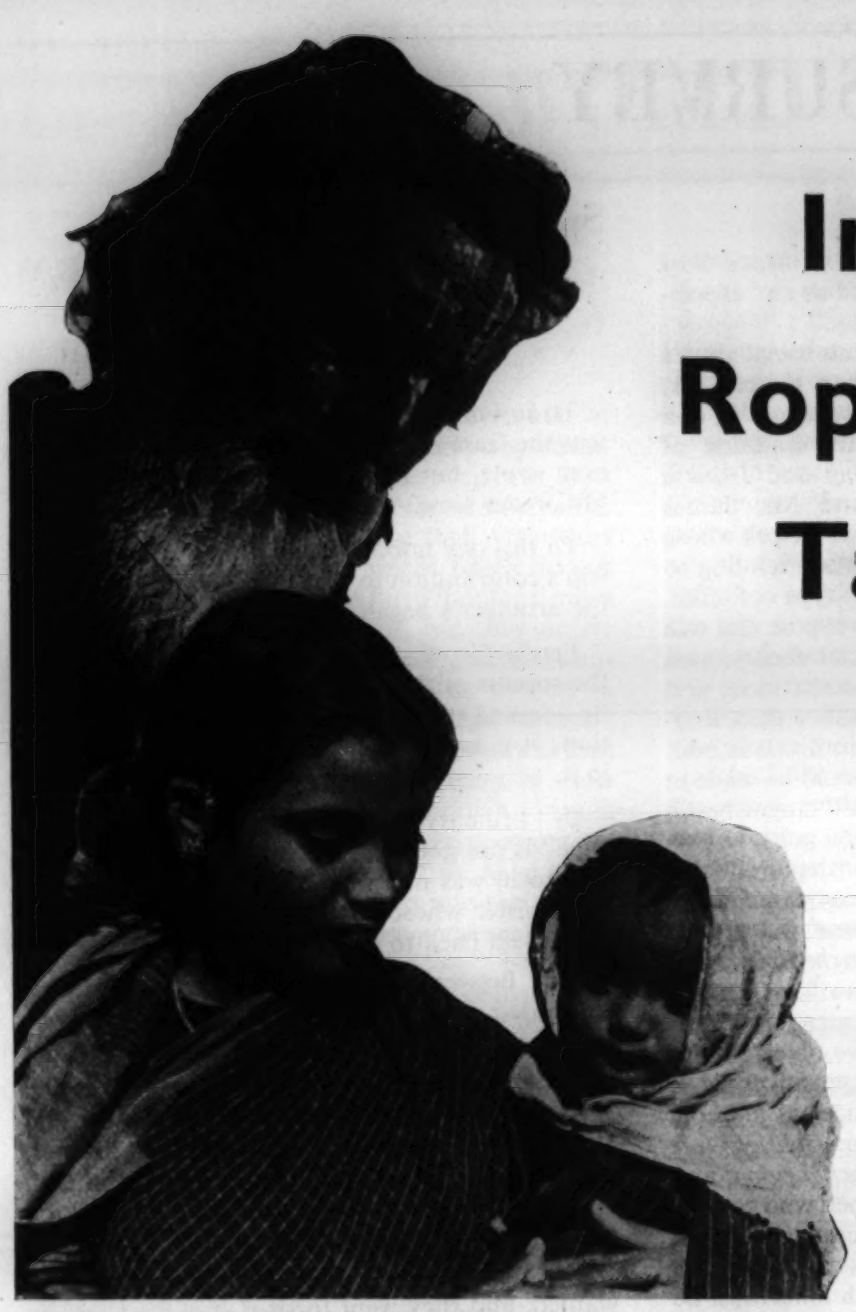
But I persist in calling Gershwin a composer of light music and a song-writer. He wrote it is true, in the style of jazz. "I Got Rhythm" has been the peg to hang many a "swing" record on. But for the most part his music was only incidentally dance music.

You've heard Sophie Tucker sing "The Man I Love"? Well, you can't dance when she sings it because it is purely and simply a twentieth-century ballad, sung freely and with the traditional "expression" of the music-hall.

Certainly there will be no more rhapsodies in blue. The cult of "swing" whatever you may think of it, is a cult for keeping jazz in its place. Gershwin tried to take it out of that place.

Which was a pity, for it was a hopeless task, and the boy had a whale of a lot of talent for a different kind of music.

— The Daily Express.



India's Rope-Trick Talkies

by

C. K. Sachi

THE stature of the industry in India may be indicated by the fact that its total capitalisation is estimated at very nearly £10,000,000. All this capital as well as the entire labour, direction and management is and has always been 100 per cent Indian. It is estimated that the industry supports about 25,000 people.

There are no less than 300 producing units and, of these, while the largest number are organised as limited liability companies (usually private) there are a few which still remain some rich man's hobby. Even of those organised as commercial concerns, the majority, as a rule, gamble precariously with one picture, one story or one set of artists. About 350 pictures are produced every year and the number has been continually on the increase, but of these, only about a dozen score spectacular success. Of recent months though, a healthy tendency is noticeable and fewer mushroom organisations spring up.

So long as the film was a novelty to dazzle the villager with its miracle of pictures talking, the technical knowledge required to produce average pictures was very little: anybody with a few thousand pounds to risk was sure of a good return and stood to gain enormously. To-day, however, the novelty has worn thin, audiences become daily more critical and, in order to compete successfully, greater experience and technical skill are required.

A number of these one-picture organisations failed disastrously, although it still is very largely true in South India that few pictures fail to recover their cost. The gambler is yielding place slowly to the sober business man who organises with a view to establishing a sound business.

The average amount spent on a talkie is about £5,000, although, every now and then, a spectacular production running to twice that amount, or more, is attempted. Economically, £5,000 makes a safe investment and it is therefore inevitable that the equipment of most studios is miserably inadequate. No British producer will hazard a production with such poor equipment, and the way some talkies are made is as marvellous as the rope-trick.

Some of the more ambitious studios describe themselves as sound-proof, but a crow on the roof or a passing car shatter the illusion. Plate glass and zinc sheets in alternate sections is the usual roofing. Bombay and Calcutta wall in their stages, but there are many, particularly in the South, which do not run to such luxuries. A few scouts outside, or a portly watchman may be, or a piece of curtain, screen operations from the prying eyes of passers-by. Judged by the standards of the market, recording is usually satisfactory and some simple, fool-proof recording system is preferred. The portable R.C.A. is a luxury and is a point for advertisement. One camera and an Eyemo is considered adequate, although some studios run to two or more cameras, but such a thing as a second camera shift is unknown. The weakest department of the studio is the laboratory. One can never be really certain of the work and it is a frequent experience still, to have the product of a whole week emerge from the laboratory with more pinholes than picture.

When the silent film started its career in India, it scored triumphantly with mythological pictures. The gods could not talk indeed, but they could appear and disappear miraculously; the seas could be made to part; a woman turned by a curse into a rock and many other marvels wrought. The first talkie pictures were also mythological, but even the vast store of India's myth and fable was not inexhaustible and the public taste for the merely miraculous began to pall. To-day the vogue of mythology is dead in the North and "social" pictures are now being made. But even now, in the South, mythology is the first favourite. The gods of these pictures are alarmingly human, lacking as much the physical grace as the moral attributes of the divinities they portrayed. Krishna has for example been represented as fat, slim, short and tall. Although these films repelled the educated, the peasant and his wife were well pleased indeed. The stuff that has taken the place of such films is however regrettable. Brilliant exceptions there are, but the attempt to Indianise the most hackneyed themes of Hollywood; to produce cheap "stunt" pictures and an atmosphere of cheap romance foreign to the spirit of the people, is the order of the day. The effort to interpret the civilisation of India, her ageless culture and her spiritual unity is yet to be made.

Indian film stars are plentiful. The stage favourites of yesterday have universally adapted the new medium, impoverishing drama with the progress of the film. We have our Garbos and Laughtons and here and there a precocious child star. One stage star was paid £7,500 for a single feature, and there are a few who earn handsome four-figure incomes. But what acting they do remains largely stagey. Songs have still a large place in public favour and many pictures in South India glory in the number of their songs: about thirty per film, each of over two minutes, is a fair average. The King, the Queen, the Saint and the clown all sing. This is partly responsible for the dreary length of the average Indian picture.

Playing down to the pit has yet to be done to the grievous detriment of quality. A director who refused to allow a child in mortal agony to sing after being bitten by a cobra was taken severely to task. Difficulties also arise in portraying love. One director was told by the producer that he should not allow the hero to kiss the heroine or even to stand too close to her. I know of one case where the producer inserted a clause for bidding close-ups. "I do not believe," declared the producer, "in showing one person only when two are talking, and when a whole person is before you, why show just a head or a shoulder."

The Industry is in a formative stage, and needs very urgently to be protected. The small investor is almost unknown in India and the big financiers have their own whims and fancies. Few, if any, have the imagination and sympathy that the art demands. At such a time it is essential that Government should give a helping hand. Sir Phiroze Sethna, President of The Indian Motion Picture Society puts the position forcibly thus:

"Broadcasting and Aviation are receiving the fullest attention and support from the Government while the Indian film industry, which is equally important and which pays directly £100,000 a year to the exchequer, does not obtain a farthing for encouragement or improvement."

LAB. WORKERS DEPEND ON OVERTIME —for Living Wage

The first of a series of articles describing the hours and working conditions of British Film Technicians, based upon material collected by the Film Council

THE facts we publish in the following statement on hours and working conditions in film laboratories were supplied by technicians employed in nine different laboratories. Five of these are among the largest in the country and the others include two plants mainly engaged in specialised work for news and colour films. Since the total number of film laboratories in England is only 15, the conditions described can be regarded as fairly representative. They are, if at all, biased in favour of the firms with more satisfactory working conditions, since the majority of those not included are small firms, some of which are greatly below the average standard.

Number of shifts worked per day

Conditions vary from firm to firm, and in the different departments of the larger units. In the majority of cases reported the department concerned worked only one shift each 24 hours, but frequently the working day commences in the early afternoon and continues into the night on certain days of the week. In cases where two or three shifts are worked (two day shifts and one night shift, or else one day shift and one night shift) there is sometimes a rota according to which technicians work alternate weeks on day or night shifts, but at least in one firm there are also permanent night workers. The working period is subject to the greatest fluctuations in laboratories engaged in newsreel work, as the following sample week shows:

Monday	2 p.m. to 11 p.m.
Tuesday	6 p.m. to 12, or in case of a rush 6 a.m.
Wednesday	8 p.m. to 8 a.m.
Thursday	6 p.m. to midnight.
Friday	2 p.m. to 11 p.m. or midnight.
Sunday	4 p.m. until work is completed either at midnight or even as late as 8 a.m.

"Normal" working hours

Normal working hours exclusive of overtime vary between 8 and 9 hours per day in different firms, 8½ hours being the most usual arrangement with a "normal" working week of between 44 and 48 hours. In the majority of firms work on Saturday afternoons is the rule for the day staffs.

Overtime

With the exception of a few firms where little overtime is demanded, this evil is a regular and much abused feature of employment in film laboratories. A total actual working week of 50 to 60 hours is the normal one for many laboratory technicians and the amount worked rises considerably in periods of exceptional rush work. The continual working periods of 30 to 40 hours demanded from technicians engaged on processing the coronation newsreels have received wide publicity in the Press, but while this is clearly an extreme case, long periods of uninterrupted labour under rush conditions are of frequent occurrence in this industry. Sunday work is exceptional in most firms.

Overtime payment

In the laboratories the whole problem of overtime is indissolubly linked with that of wages. Although the present inquiry excludes this subject, it is essential to note that in this branch of the industry the average rate of wages is so low that in many cases the employees have come to depend on overtime work for a living income. It is known that in one instance a scheme of the management to increase the staff in order to abolish overtime work was opposed by the employees on these grounds. But there are also other cases where overtime is a condition of continued employment. The most usual rates of pay for overtime work are time and a half for the first two hours after the normal working day, and double pay for very late night and Sunday work. But the conditions vary in this respect and in some cases the rates are as low as time and a quarter and time and a half respectively, while there are firms in which a flat wage per week is paid irrespective of overtime.

Compensation for short time work

The extent to which overtime work has come to be regarded as normal in the industry is shown by the fact that in those cases, where an irregular supply of work enables technicians to leave early on certain occasions, a deduction is made not from the ordinary but from the overtime pay.

Holidays

The usual practice appears to be a two weeks' holiday with pay, but there are also some cases where only one week is given, while in one instance the technicians receive one week's holiday and an extra week's pay at Christmas in compensation for the second week. In another firm holidays are regarded as a "privilege" instead of a right of the staff.

Payment of wages during periods of sickness

As a rule the wages of regular employees continue to be paid, when they are ill. In some instances, however, there are time limits for pay at the full rate, only half the wage being paid after a relatively short period. Two recent cases are known where holidays were cancelled in compensation for loss of working time owing to sickness.

Air conditioning and sanitary arrangements

Since much of the work in laboratories has to be carried out in darkness or semi-darkness the problem of air-conditioning and temperature regulation is of the greatest importance for the health of the employees. Unfortunately conditions vary greatly in this respect even among the larger firms. In one of the latter, we were informed, there is an air-conditioning installation, but it appears to go wrong continually, with the result that the temperature in the processing rooms frequently rises to 80 and 90 degrees, while the atmosphere is vitiated by chemical fumes. Another reply from a firm, otherwise air-conditioned, is: "chemical basement with little ventilation." Cases in which health arrangements are unsatisfactory are unfortunately only too frequent.

Breaks in shifts for meals

Except in certain cases of night work there are regular breaks for meals in all the laboratories.

General features of employment in laboratories

The majority of technicians working in laboratories are regularly employed, but mechanisation of standard processes is working a revolution in their status. There is a widespread tendency gradually to replace older men by juvenile labour working automatic machines at greatly reduced pay.

PEOPLE OF THE STUDIOS

● Great Britain

Denham

Korda's plan for discovering Britain's potential stars and starlets . . . talent scouts spot likely young actors and actresses who are given rôles in a series of short films. Oscar Deutsch will play these in his cinemas, and audiences register their opinions of the newcomers on provided cards. Mr. Korda casts accordingly.

Latest outcome of the Goldwyn-Korda-United Artists deal . . . Goldwyn hopes to make two pictures at Denham next year, and Walter Wanger one. Korda himself promises between twenty-four and twenty-eight pictures, to cost £2,000,000.

* * * *

Basil Dean brought genuine stall-holders from a London street-market to adorn a Soho set, built for *First and Last*, a Galsworthy story starring Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier. Out in the grounds the South Riding Agricultural Society's Annual Show was reconstructed for *South Riding*—cameraman Harry Stradling tracking his camera through acres of cattle, sheep and men . . . carefully avoiding Spanish Galleons and Russian buildings in the background.

* * * *

Ruth Chatterton, playing opposite Anton Walbrook, Prince Consort of *Victoria the Great*, in *The Rat*—new version of Ivor Novello's silent success. Hans Remeau, who worked with Walbrook on Austrian film *Maskerade*, preparing the film, Marjorie Gaffney scripting, and Jack Raymond directing.

Satisfactory verdict passed on first few thousand feet of *The Drum*, new Sabu vehicle from story by A. E. W. Mason. Zoltan Korda shooting near the Khyber pass.

Annabella still at Denham . . . making *Follow the Sun* with David Niven, Paul Lukas, Romney Brent, Stewart Rome and Frederick Dewhurst. Harold Schuster directing.

Barry K. Barnes, playing lead in *Return of the Scarlet Pimpernel*, never been filmed before. Barnes is twenty-eight, born in Chelsea, threw over architecture for the stage.

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Basil Wright and Ian Dalrymple making a film of the Basque refugee children for Victor Saville productions . . . shooting in the refugee camp, in the homes to which some have been drafted, and in the studios. Arthur Jarrett of Gaumont-British and Oscar Deutsch of Odeon Theatres are securing distribution.

Elstree

Albert de Courville is directing *Old Boy* with Albert Burdon.

Joe Rock, managing director of Rock Studios, is an old hand in the industry. Entered business during the war with Vitagraph, writing, directing and acting in comedies for five years. Made comedies and dramas for most U.S. companies; spent a year in Japan, China and Java experimenting with Howard Hughes Multicolour system. Produced famous Java volcano film, *Krakatoa*,which earned the Hollywood Academy Award for the best novelty picture of 1934. Came to England to supervise a picture for Wainwright Productions—stayed to form his own company at Elstree, since producing light comedies with Nellie Wallace, Archie Pitt, Claude Dampier, the Mills Bros., etc. Latest pictures: *Cotton Queen*, with Will Fyffe and Stanley Holloway, and *The Edge of the World*, a film of Scottish life on an isolated island.

Pinewood

Alfred Hitchcock, Nova Pilbeam and Derick de Marney still working on *A Shilling for Candles*. Bernard Knowles, cameraman, turned on *Good Companions* and *Jack Ahoy* for Gaumont at Shepherd's Bush.

Gangway clear of the cutting room, Jessie Matthews and Sonnie Hale starting *Full Sail* with Roland Young, Barry Mackay, Noel Madison and Jack Whiting. Glen MacWilliams at the camera.

Big surprise of the month . . . Jack Buchanan's company to make a film version of Gordon Daviot's stage play *Richard of Bordeaux*—with John Gielgud. Film is first on the 1938 schedule. No director assigned yet.

Cricklewood

In *Old Mother Riley* the name part is taken by Arthur Lucan, the first man to play a woman in a full-length feature film. Oswald Mitchell, the director, has been General and Production Manager of Stoll Picture Productions since 1927, and is Director of Visual Education. He has written and produced for Butcher's, *Danny Boy*, *Shipmates o' Mine*, *King of Hearts*, *Variety Parade*.

DENHAM ECONOMY AXE

Disquieting news has reached *W.F.N.* of the so-called economy measures slowly breaking up the finest equipped and most organised special effects department outside Hollywood. London Films' greatest asset is tobogganing into oblivion.

Already several members have been transferred to other departments to secure a small saving in monetary outlay with a resultant loss in co-operative organisation.

Due to this, Lawrence Butler the present head of the effects department, one of the most skilled miniature builders in the world will not renew his contract which expires on August 16th. He intends to return to Hollywood.

Members are applying to other studios for employment and so a valuable team of technicians trained at heavy cost by L.F.P. is being disbanded. One man writes: "Fear of unemployment has completely changed the once friendly atmosphere of these studios to one of suspicion and depression, while red tape slowly strangles the loyalty of employees without whose aid top grade pictures cannot be made."

The complaint is hereby registered, but it should be remembered that Korda, like other producers, is having his difficulties.

● America

Warner Bros.

Anatole Litvak directing Charles Boyer, Claudette Colbert and Basil Rathbone in *Tovarich* . . . cost expected to top all films on the current list. Robert Lord producing.

Leslie Howard-Olivia de Haviland starrer, *It's Love I'm After* (formerly *The Love Derby*), in the cutting room. . . original story by Maurice Hanline (who wrote *One Rainy Afternoon*), scripted by Casey Robinson (who scripted *Call It a Day*), and directed by Archie Mayo. Eric Blore, Bonita Granville, George Barbier and E. E. Clive in the cast.

Errol Flynn, busy as anybody just now, co-stars with Joan Blondell in *Perfect Specimen* with Michael Curtiz directing and Edward Everett Horton supplying comic relief.

Kay Francis teamed with Preston Foster in *First Lady*, Dick Powell with Lee Dixon in *Varsity Show* — both pictures now shooting.

* * * *

King and the Chorus Girl temporarily held back from this country till the topical background is a thing of past memory . . . maybe we won't see the picture at all as American newspapermen say Fernand Gravet bears striking resemblance to the Duke of Windsor. Title now changed to *Romance in Paris*, to avoid danger of libel.

United Artists

Selznick International's nine months' search for a Tom Sawyer ends with the discovery of twelve-year-old Tommy Kelly, picked from 25,000 boys whom Selznick claims to have interviewed. Tommy lives in East Bronx, New York's poorest quarters . . . father drawing poor-relief.

* * * *

A new company, Mayfair Productions, formed by four former Disney associates, making Skippy cartoons in technicolor. Skippy has appeared daily for the past fifteen years in more than 100 American newspapers.

* * * *

Archie Mayo taking over *Marco Polo* from John Cromwell. Cromwell threw over the direction of this Gary Cooper picture after four days of production . . . reputedly because of story differences with Sam Goldwyn.

William Cameron Menzies, *Things to Come* director, signed by Selznick as production assistant and co-director of picture with Robert Sinclair.

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Dorothy Parker and Alan Campbell, husband-wife writing team, signed on with Goldwyn to dialogue *The Goldwyn Follies* and script *A Kiss in the Sun*, Gary Cooper-Merle Oberon picture with William Wyler as director.

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Selznick negotiating to import Hitchcock . . . nothing fixed yet.

M.G.M.

Interest is centred round two Ferenc Molnar plays at Culver City . . . William Powell and Myrna Loy starring in *Double Wedding*, from Molnar's legitimate play "Great Love"—Richard Thorpe directing. Joan Crawford, Franchot Tone, Robert Young and Reginald Owen in *The Bride Wore Red*, scripted from "The Girl from Trieste" and directed by Dorothy Arzner, only woman director in Hollywood. Joseph Mankiewicz produces both.

Florence Rice . . . featuring in *Double Wedding* . . . well on her way up the ladder. Daughter of Grantland Rice, America's ace sports writer and commentator, began her stage career with three successive comedies, *June Moon*, *Once in a Lifetime* and *She Loves Me Not*.

Eddie Quillan, winner of Academy Award for his feature part in *Mutiny on the Bounty*, making screen come-back in *The Umbrella Man*, currently shooting with George Murphy, Rita Johnson, and Leo Carrillo. Quillan interested himself in the Hollywood Little Theatre movement in his vacation from the studio, producing plays to keep his dramatic technique up to scratch. Plays juvenile lead in *The Umbrella Man*, William Thiele directing.

Freddie Bartholomew and Mickey Rooney together again in *Thoroughbreds Don't Care*.

20th Century-Fox

Gregory Ratoff, versatile writer-actor-director, directing *Lancer Spy*, Marte McKenna's sequel to *I Was a Spy*, with Peter Lorre and Dolores del Rio.

Born in Samara, Russia, Ratoff was trained for business at Imperial School of Commerce, Petrograd . . . became Moscow Art Theatre's best-known character actor. Later held *Blossom Time* for two years on Broadway . . .went to Hollywood, writing *Sins of Man* and *Cafe Metropole* for Fox, and currently *You Can't Have Everything*, musical now on the editing bench.

Among 66 features promised for the coming season: *In Old Chicago*, with Alice Faye, Tyrone Power and Don Ameche; *Hudson Bay Company* (a unit has gone to Canada for location shooting); *Stanley and Livingstone* (Osa Johnson, widow of Martin Johnson, heading a party now in Africa for local colour); *Second Honeymoon*, with Tyrone Power and Loretta Young; *Moonstruck*, with the Ritz Brothers; *Ali Baba Goes to Town* and *Saratoga Chips* with Eddie Cantor; *Mother Knows Best*, with the Dionne Quintuplets; a series of *Mr. Moto* films with Peter Lorre; and *Suez* for Simone Simon.

Paramount

Unit aboard three-masted schooner *Golden Gate* off Cataline Isle getting marine and shipboard scenes for *Ebb Tide* . . . colour expert Robert C. Bruce supervising. Picture stars Oscar Homolka, Frances Farmer and Barry Fitzgerald. James Hogan directs.

Homolka's next part will be a hard-boiled sergeant of *Beau Geste* in the colour re-make prepared by Lucien Hubbard. George Raft, Ray Milland and Richard Arlen set as three brothers.

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W. C. Fields joining up with the *Big Broadcast of* 1838 cast. *That Man's Here Again* and *Things Begin to Happen* to follow.

Radio

Big picture here is *Stage Door*, directed by Gregory La Cava. Anthony Veiller scripted from stage play by George Kaufman and Edna Ferber—he did the same job on *Michael Strogoff*, *Winterset*, *A Woman Rebels* and *The Ex-Mrs. Bradford*. Cast includes Ginger Rogers, Katharine Hepburn, Gail Patrick, Adolphe Menjou, Andrea Leeds and Constance Collier.

Kurt Neuman, responsible for Bobbie Breen's two pictures to date, directs the boy star again in *Make a Wish* . . . Marion Claire, Basil Rathbone and Ralph Forbes in supporting cast. In same studios William Seiter directing Gene Raymond and Harriett Hilliard in *The Life of the Party*—and James Ellison and Marsha Hunt starring in *Annapolis Salute* (original story and direction by Christy Cabanne).

Columbia

Grace Moore and Melvyn Douglas at work on *The Sound of Your Voice*, comedy drama by novelist Stephen Morehouse Avery (he wrote screen play of *The Gorgeous Hussy*).

Francis' Lederer and Madeleine Carroll starring in *Thanks for Everything* (title changed from *Thanks for Nothing*). Grace Bradley in supporting cast.

● France

From the studios: Marcel Carné, once assistant of Jaques Feyder and director of *Jenny*, finishing *Drole de Drama* . . . Tourjansky shooting *Le Maître de Poste* with Harry Baur; Pierre Chenal *Alibi*, with Stroheim; Marc Allegret *J'Accuse* . . . Julien Duvivier finished *Un Carnet de Bal*. And the following films are announced: *Le Roi de Bagnol* for Marcel Pagnol; *Altitude* 3200 for Jean Benoit-Lévy; *Le Diamant Bleu* for Victor Trivas; and *Une Femme au Bout du Monde* for Jean Epstein.

Nearly forty cinemas have been opened at the Paris Exhibition, representing various countries. Russia claims the largest, having 400 seats—others include Germany (240 seats), Denmark (200 seats), Belgium (175 seats), Switzerland, Roumania, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, Luxemburg, etc. Britain is not represented, other than in the International Gala presentation of the Cinema.

Le Palais de la Découverte is showing scientific films—*Les Cycles de la Nature*, by Jean Painlevé (after the theories of the Italian mathematician Vito Volterra on mathematic biology); two other purely mathematical films by Painlevé, shot in collaboration with M. Dufour, *La Quatrième Dimension* and *La Similitude des Longeurs et des Vitesses*. There are also astronomical films by Painlevé and Leclerc and a meteorological film by Devoux.

La Palace de la Lumière is exhibiting films by Jean Tedesco, Jean Benoit-Lévy and J. C. Bernard, which by a new process known as "Hypergonar" will be projected on to a large wall, 120 feet long and 30 feet high.

● Germany

Plenty of activity at Ufa's Neubablesberg studios . . . director Karl Ritter busy supervising the construction of a village street for *Unternehem Michael* ("The Michael Enterprise")—Matthias Wiemann in the lead. Georg Jacoby shooting interiors for his peasant comedy *Spiel auf der Tenne* ("Play on the Thrashing Ground"), scripted by Alois Lippl from his own play . . . exteriors shot in Bavaria. Erich Washneck turning on *Streit um den Knaben Jo* ("Dispute About the Boy Jo"), with Lil Dagover and Willy Fritsch. Lilian Harvey co-starring with Willy Birgel in her second film for the company, *Fanny Elsner*—a biography of the dancer. Paul Martin directing.

Other films before the cameras—*Daphne und der Diplomat* ("Daphne and her Diplomat"), directed by Robert A. Stemmle; *Der Landstreicher* ("The Tramp"), directed by Carl Lamac; *Die Gelbe Flagge* ("The Yellow Flag") by Gerhard Lamprecht; *Die Warschauer Zitadelle* by Fritz Peter Buch, and *Gueule d'Amour*, produced by a French production staff.

Françoise Rosay . . . starring in *Mein Sohn, der Herr Minister* . . . wife of Jaques Feyder and star of his picture *La Kermesse Héroïque*. Brought up in France, trained for the stage and opera. Made first film in America . . . the German version of Buster Keaton's *Casanova Despite Himself* . . . later made French films in Germany, spotted by Karl Ritter and engaged for character part in *Die Insel* ("The Island"), followed by *Pension Mimosa* and *La Maternite*. *La Kermesse* brought her international fame.

● Japan

Five hundred films to be made in Japan next season, according to Nagamasa Kawakita, head of Towa Shoji-Kaisha, Tokyo distributors. "This number of pictures is necessary," Kawakita said, "because of double or triple bills in the country. For sixpence, patrons can sit through a show lasting five hours."

Approximately three hundred American features shown in Japan each year at present. Favourite stars: Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo, Shirley Temple, Clark Gable, Robert Taylor, Gary Cooper. 1,600 cinemas now operating in the country, some seating 4,000.

● Austria

Outlook for the industry brightening . . . eleven pictures planned for June to December, against only two made first half of the year. Fritz Hirt of Berlin Tobis, after long consultations with Reich Film Chamber, obtained a permit to show Austrian films throughout Germany—provided they comply with the German Aryan laws. Eight of the pictures planned to be made by Tobis Sascha and three by Selenophon. Paula Wessely to star in two and Willy Forst in one.

A film boosting German aerial achievement and featuring the Graf Zeppelin, which Forst was to produce, has been indefinitely postponed owing to the Hindenburg disaster.

REVIEW OF REVIEWS Edited by H. E. Blyth

Review of the Month

★ *Under the Red Robe*

(Victor Seastrom—20th Century-Fox.)
Conrad Veidt, Annabella, Raymond Massey, Romney Brent, Sophie Stewart.

The period film, we are continually being told (by people in the industry, not the public), is dead. And the period film, hardier than the prophets, continues for the delight of the romantically-inclined in an unromantic age. The coming of colour may be expected to give it a new vogue, perhaps the greatest vogue it has ever enjoyed. Heaven send us producers endowed with discerning colour sense, or we shall lose the art of the screen in a riot of gaudy hues.

Handled with such discernment, *Under the Red Robe* would have made a good colour film. But for amends there were Georges Périnal and James Wong Howe at the cameras. This is a film to enjoy if you have a heart for swashbuckling. Personally, I think the infallibility of the story-book hero is just plain, darned silly, but the romantic historical novel never made the ghost of a concession to small-minded realists. D'Artagnan, Gil de Berault, the Scarlet Pimpernel and the rest of that heartening company of yore still occupy, I suppose, a place in the dim recesses of memory's gallery, whence they are wont to emerge, rebuking our latter-day cynicism and sophistry, at the bidding of a film such as this. And if it accomplishes an hour's return to the zest with which we once discovered Stanley Weyman and the rest, why, then, it must seem very well worth while.

"Under the Red Robe"

Under the Red Robe has an imposing cast. Nobody better than Conrad Veidt could have been found for Gil de Berault. If he wears the slouch hat with the long feathers in it, he is as far as a granite statue from ever becoming pixilated. His feet seem born to bear the jackboot and the spur, and it is Conrad of the gleaming eye all the time. Perhaps it is a shame to put Veidt up as a swashbuckler, but restraint gives credibility to every inch of his performance. It certainly was a pity to give Raymond Massey the upturned moustache of Cardinal Richelieu. Doubtless it was not to be helped, but I can assign to no other reason a loss of dramatic stature. He hasn't quite the presence, and walks too quickly, and leaves his admirers to fall back upon the recollection of that brief but marvellously sinister achievement of his as the King of Spain in *Fire Over England.*

Annabella is the Lady Marguerite, and here again is the quality of restraint in perfection. A very calm and lovely actress is Annabella. The rather dimpled charm of Sophie Stewart as Elise goes well beside her.

Under the Red Robe was produced by the American Robert T. Kane, and directed by Victor Seastrom, who is Swedish. James Wong Howe is Japanese, Veidt was born in Berlin, Annabella in Paris, and Massey in Toronto. But it was made at Denham Studios and Sophie Stewart was born in Perthshire, which entitles it to be regarded as one of the British-cosmopolitan films.

—*The Birmingham Mail*

The picture pursues its narrative rather more solemnly than we should have preferred, blunting its melodramatic edges against dull stretches of action and dialogue and sacrificing much of its romantic vigour to the inescapable maturity of its hero. For all that, it has its moments. You will find them predominantly in the scenes involving Raymond Massey's Cardinal Richelieu and Romney Brent's roguish manservant, Marius. Mr. Massey rescues the Cardinal from the elfin grasp of Mr. Arliss, presenting him in full panoply of ruthlessness and implacability. Mr. Brent's Marius, an amusing little scamp, serves to relieve the dour monotony of Mr. Veidt's performance and gives the film its much-needed comic relief. With more of Mr. Massey and Mr. Brent, with a bit more lightness in the script and with a younger man than Mr. Veidt to carry the central rôle, *Under the Red Robe* might have been a grand romance. As it is, it's just a bit to the credit side of average.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

★ *Make Way for To-morrow*

(Leo McCarey—Paramount.)
Beulah Bondi, Victor Moore, Fay Bainter, Thomas Mitchell, Barbara Read.

There are no stars. The two principal characters are in their seventies, married fifty years.

The ending is logical, leaving you with a fervent wish that things should magically change—the same wish we so often have in life.

These facts make it at once an unorthodox film. It is also an uncommonly good one.

It is the story of three months in the lives of this simple old couple. They call their married children together, and tell them quite frankly that they have no money, that their small-town home is to be taken from them.

Don't imagine this is a tear-brimming "Over the Hill." With Victor Moore as the father there is a wealth of humour. The right kind of humour that has pathos in it.

Beulah Bondi, as the old lady, gives the character balance and thus points the family's problems with desperate clarity. There is fine acting, too, from Thomas Mitchell and Fay Bainter, and an attractive sketch of cheeky adolescence by Barbara Read.

There have been few films with so many chances of being insufferable, but this one edges round them all and turns out movingly bittersweet. —Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

This is a maundering, melancholy story, humped flabbily together after the manner of a mud-pie, slapped on the silver trowel of sentimentality, and extended for your kind inspection with the label: "Drama as big as life itself, brought to the screen by Paramount in the most appealing story of the age. It's the story for everyone, because it's everyone's own story." Please, is it? How many of my elder married readers (if I have any) with oodles of children (if they have any) remember suffering the brazen insult, the blackguard injury experienced by Victor Moore and Beulah Bondi in *Make Way for To-morrow?* At most, I hear one whispered "Yes," one furtive "What about King Lear?" But everybody—for this is everybody's "own story"? No, no, a thousand times no! And, even if it does happen, we don't want to see it happen on the pictures, unless the tale is told with a Shakespearean strength, a decent restraint and no hint of the morbidity that moans: "Melancholy for melancholy's sake!" Even a happy ending is denied us. For we leave Miss Bondi turning tearfully to her Home for the Aged, and Mr. Moore turning just as tearfully towards distant California in the knowledge that they will never see one another again—and in the pious hope that this picture *will* make way for to-morrow. It certainly deserves to run no longer.

—Paul Dehn, *The Sunday Referee*

Critical Summary.

Opinions were sharply divided over this picture. The sentiment was generally considered to be excessive, but nevertheless many critics shared Stephen Watts' view that a difficult subject had been handled with real poignancy. The "New York Times" considered it likely to be one of the ten best pictures of 1937. (*See also appraisal of Direction on page* 10.)

W.F.N. Selection

Make Way for To-morrow * * *

Night Must Fall * *

The Mill on the Floss *

Parnell *

They Gave Him a Gun *

Other Films Covered in this Issue

Under the Red Robe

Nancy Steele is Missing

The Woman Between

La Mort du Sphinx

Paris Commune

Mr. Flow

Der Herrscher

★ *The Mill on the Floss*

(Tim Whelan—National Provincial.)
Frank Lawton, Victoria Hopper, Geraldine Fitzgerald.

The Mill on the Floss, George Eliot's tale of the family feuds of the Wakems and the Tullivers looks rather artificial stuff on the screen, and as a record of the novel the film is not helped by a change of ending. The film is saved, however, by the presence of a first-rate cast, in which the acting of the younger generation of players is as unforced and natural as that of the older generation is forced and incredible. Frank Lawton makes a winning figure of the hero, and Victoria Hopper is admirably cast as the sweet-natured Lucy. Maggie Tulliver is played by Geraldine Fitzgerald, whom you may recall in *Turn of the Tide*. Her performance here is a lovely thing, both in its outward movements and in its hints of spiritual grace, sincere and moving from beginning to end. Her beauty is not the usual shop-made stuff of the screen; she is real and vivid, and her personality is such that it is difficult to take your eyes off her when she is on the screen. Tim Whelan, experienced American director (he graduated in the Mack Sennett school) has directed the tale from outside rather than from within, and he is happier in the excitements of flood at the climax than in the building of atmosphere in the more leisurely parts of the film.

—Frank Evans, *The Newcastle Evening Chronicle*

Critical Summary.

A star has been awarded to this picture simply because of the excellence of Miss Geraldine Fitzgerald's performance.

★ *Nancy Steele is Missing*

(George Marshall—20th Century-Fox.)
Victor McLaglen, Walter Connolly, Peter Lorre, June Lang.

Victor McLaglen, serving a 17-year sentence for assault and battery, causes prison riots by trying to force his militant pacifism down the throats of his fellow convicts. His one friend in the gaol is Peter Lorre; a killer with a sense of humour. But Lorre, seemingly such a pleasant cell mate, is really intent on discovering McLaglen's secret—a kidnapping job he did years before. McLaglen, you see, hates war but he loves his private fights. He hates war so much that he snatches the infant daughter of a munition king (Walter Connolly) and leaves her to be brought up in the country by some Irish friends.

The prison sentence intervenes. Out of gaol with his hair grey, he sets out to find the girl (June Lang), now a beautiful innocent of 19. But Lorre is on his track and there is slaughter in the end. Not for one moment does one have any sympathy for McLaglen. Worse still, one does not believe in the character at all. He rants and roars and fails to camouflage a great emptiness. A dullish picture.

—Ian Coster, *The Evening Standard*

Hollywood's attitude towards Big Business is well illustrated in *Nancy Steele is Missing*. At first it almost seems as if a genuine condemnation is to be made of war profiteering and the private sale of armaments. Victor McLaglen, as a confirmed pacifist, kidnaps the daughter of a millionaire armament magnate and is then sent to prison for a long sentence on another charge. His hatred of the millionaire, though fanatical, is understandable. It is only reasonable to expect that the millionaire will be the villain of the piece. But Big Business cannot be dealt with so sacrilegiously. Steele, the war profiteer in guns, is charity personified. He calls his chauffeur by his Christian name, and is generous and amiable towards all whom he meets. His private life is impeccable; it seems reasonably certain that he is kind to animals. And thus, in Hollywood, all is for the best in the best of best possible worlds and even a dealer in death turns out to have a heart of gold.

—*W.F.N.*

★ *Night Must Fall*

(Richard Thorpe—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
Robert Montgomery, Rosalind Russell, Dame May Whitty.

They tell me Robert Montgomery fought and bled to play the rôle of Danny in *Night Must Fall*. Mr. Montgomery is, if you follow the cinema at all, Hollywood's most beloved smart aleck, its most popular exponent of the nice young gentleman with a flair for repartee. Danny, of the Emlyn Williams stage play, is neither of these. He is a homicidal maniac of varying degrees of viciousness and ingratiation.

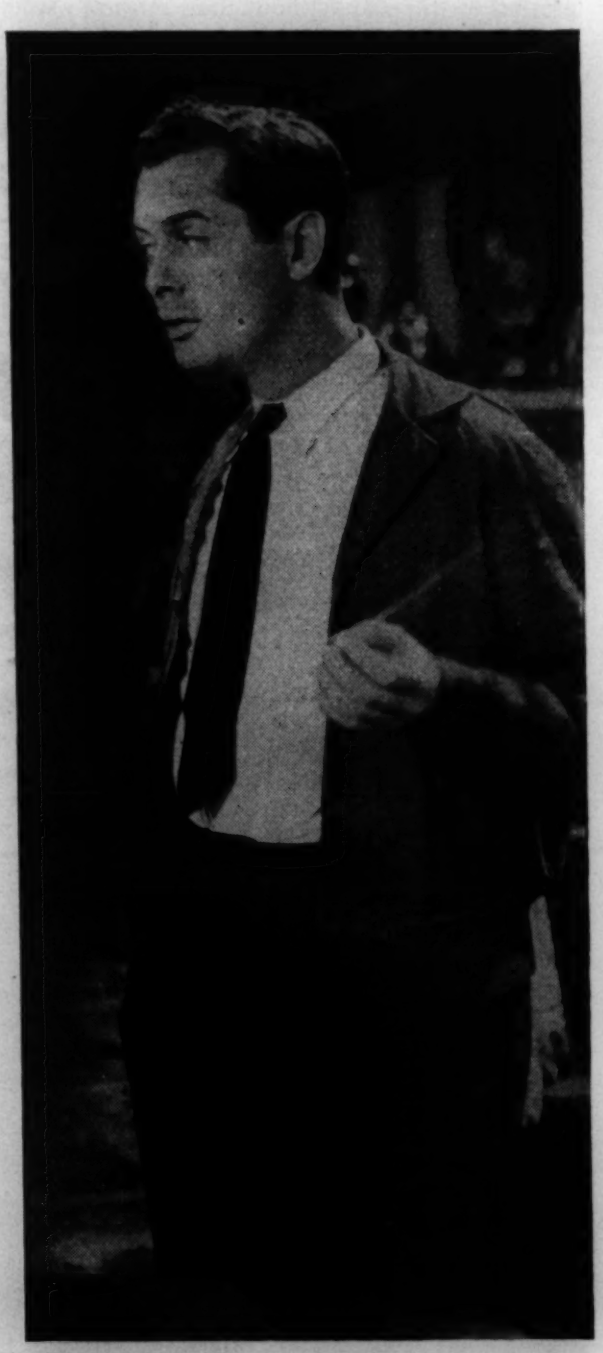
It is the amazingly sustained performance of Robert Montgomery which holds the film together. Action is almost at a standstill, and the sequences hardly ever wander from the Bramson house and garden. There is only that suggestion of malevolence at the beginning, and the merest curve of activity to create suspense. But it is this static quality that emphasises the rising horror I felt at Danny's incredible campaign.

The insolence and bravura in this Danny will shake the Robert Montgomery Fan Club to its very constitution. He is not a pretty figure, standing in front of his employer with his thumbs catching his pockets and a cigarette swinging from the corner of his mouth, deliberating the thrill of slaughter. But he's a commanding one, and that's up for commendation. His one horrid moment of fear after the departure of the detective is to me the high point of the film. And the high point, to date, of Mr. Montgomery's acting career.

—Katharine Best, *Stage*

It is difficult to imagine the suave polished, happy-go-lucky Robert Montgomery in the rôle of an egotistical murderer, feigning the dull-witted, slow-thinking country hotel porter, who, like most murderers, has a dual personality. He makes the change in Metro's version of Emlyn Williams' stage success, *Night Must Fall*.

I try to use superlatives sparingly, but I have no hesitation in saying that Montgomery's performance is the best he has ever given, and among the six best pieces of acting I have ever seen on the screen.



"Night Must Fall"

(*Night Must Fall—continued*)

His study is one of brilliant subtleties. With apparent ease he thrills and fascinates, suggesting the horror of a warped mind even in his most charming moments.

Emlyn Williams succeeded in getting into the mind of a type of murderer when he conceived the character of Danny; Montgomery shows you that mind with all its cunning, its simplicities and its egotistical imaginings.

—Richard Haestier, *The Star*

Critical Summary.

Robert Montgomery's determination to forsake the inevitable playboy parts for a chance to act seems to have been altogether justified. His playing of Danny was very well received on both sides of the Atlantic. The casting of Miss Rosalind Russell did not receive so unanimous a vote.

★ *Parnell*

(John M. Stahl—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, Edna May Oliver, Edmund Gwenn.

Parnell is dull. It omits entirely the background of evictions, dynamitings, murders from ambush and all the fierce prejudice that formed the background of the era. Without that, *Parnell's* story loses its meaning. The result is a mixture of Uncle Tom, Dostoievsky and a high school tableau with a touch of Biblical allegory. Clark Gable and Myrna Loy are miscast. At moments they even look rather foolish. Gable, as Parnell, is incredible. Seated in the House of Commons, as leader of the Irish Party, he is a nineteenth-century collar "ad," making history and chasing Myrna Loy in a Committee Room. Nobody in America will care that Pigott, the blackmailer, who fled to Spain and actually committed suicide, is here made to shoot himself outside the English court room. Nobody will care that the eight or nine-year affair between Mrs. O'Shea and Parnell is condensed to a matter of months, or that numerous other liberties have been taken. In England and in Ireland, however, they may care.

—*Variety*

Trudging as I do to the movies year in and year out, I seem always capable of amazement at the amount of boredom they can arouse. Especially do I feel so in a case of this sort, where money has been spent to give the whole thing a rich setting, where persons of recognised talent have been employed in the making, where expert performers have been engaged for prominent rôles, and where history provides the kernel for drama and romance to a superlative degree. Perhaps, after all, the film is but a rebuke to idle pleasure-seekers. As such it is highly successful. In the first place, probably history provided a too heady situation for our discreet era. The affair of Mr. Parnell and the highly stimulating Mrs. Katie O'Shea presents problems that no nice movie functionary can pretend to understand. I must say that the two leading players, expert though they may be in their way, give not the slightest indication of trying to understand anything. Mr. Gable wears sideburns for the occasion and relies upon that adornment for the extra subtleties requisite to the stormy political career of Parnell. Miss Loy dons a bonnet and sheds a tear now and again. I should add that the romance, as presented on the screen, is persistently chaperoned, with affable humour, by the aunt, played by Edna May Oliver in her genteel mood.

—John Mosher, *The New Yorker*

"They Gave Him a Gun"

★ *The Woman Between*

(Anatole Litvak—Radio.)
Paul Muni, Miriam Hopkins, Louis Hayward, Colin Clive.

The Woman Between won't mean anything to art or commerce. It's just another tear-jerker, punctuated with bullets. Not that it's bad exactly. Muni's performance as the French airman, bearded and a trifle gauche, sensitive to his unpopularity, regarded by his comrades as a jinx because two of his observers have been killed, is a strong and convincing bit of work, at times really moving. Where *The Woman Between* falls down is in its detail. You have seen all the people, except possibly the bearded airman, a dozen times before; the humour is standardised Mack Sennett. Louis Hayward is tense and taut in the Noel Coward manner, and Miriam Hopkins, though by no means without talent, is unmistakably from that part of Gaul which lies south of the Mason and Dixon line.

—George Campbell, *The Bystander*

The Woman Between is an emotional story of a French air pilot and his observer in the Great War, the woman being the wife of the one and the mistress of the other.

Since this load of passion is too much for any one cinema airplane to carry, the lover is eventually shot down in the cockpit, leaving the future clear for technical felicity.

The film is from a French novel, *L'Equipage*, and is presented with frank American sentiment by a Russian director out of England and Austria. All the actors perform industriously, and cry a good deal at odd moments, for which you can hardly blame them. The sound effects men, though, and the composers of background music appear to enjoy themselves hugely, and the stunt fliers have a really grand time.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Observer*

★ *They Gave Him a Gun*

(W. S. Van Dyke—Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.)
Spencer Tracy, Franchot Tone, Gladys George.

The time to make a noise about it will be when Spencer Tracy gives a bad performance. All that need be said now is that here he gives another admirable one. So does Franchot Tone in a part well away from his usual polished impudence. This time he is the subject of as extraordinary a sermon as Hollywood has ever preached. The text is that the U.S. Government, having taught its young men to use guns for 1917, automatically trained them to come back home and be gangsters. A logical projection of that thought surely is that Britain ought to be three years ahead of its gangster era. The acting is better than the story, and the story a mile ahead of its moral.

The best moment is Tracy, his eyes closed in calm reverie and a gun in his face, telling Tone what he thinks of him. Miss George I don't think is a film bet. You can take me up on that if I'm wrong. —Stephen Watts, *The Sunday Express*

They Gave Him a Gun is a vaguely intense Hollywood picture, half-war film and half gangster-film, with lots of background music, a blonde nurse, and a moral. The hero is a reluctant soldier who wins the Croix du Guerre for sniping Germans in 1916, and who comes home and starts sniping Americans in 1918. By 1936 he is a sniper

of New York business men on quite a large scale, and the moral seems to be that if you teach a man to use a gun he will simply keep on using it.

—C. A. Lejeune, *The Observer*

★ *La Mort du Sphinx*

(Dr. Lewis Carls—French.)
Ingrid Bigum.

This film, adapted from M. Jean Cocteau's play, *La Mort du Sphinx*, is a very curious film which leaves at the end a large interrogation mark. Why was it ever produced? The one reasonable answer is that Miss Ingrid Bigum is given a chance to act, and act she does, but this once granted other subsidiary little question marks keep raising their inquisitive heads. If this film was to be made at all, why was it not made with a more severe intention and why was the story of Oedipus thrust almost into the background? Above all, why on earth was the matronly figure of a citizen of Thebes allowed to hold up the action for so long? Her acting was admirable, but it had nothing at all to do with the tragic story of Oedipus or of the intertwined mortal and immortal lives of the Sphinx. Mortally the Sphinx, as Miss Bigum shows her, is an impatient, pitiful person, longing for love and weary of killing, young, tender, almost adolescent. When she reveals herself to Oedipus as the Sphinx she is old, experienced, disillusioned in all except one thing—her need to be loved. In a long monologue, beautifully spoken and balanced, she pours out to him the long story of her life and practises and gives him the answer to the riddle which means death to the man who cannot answer it. At times *The Sphinx* is impressive but on the whole not impressive enough to justify the film. —*The Times*

It was not long ago that Jean Cocteau made his debut as a film director before the more intellectual sections of London's movie fans with *Le Sang d'un Poete*. This film caused a minor stir. In some quarters it was dubbed surrealist, in others pronounced meaningless; there was also a squeamish minority which departed from the auditorium with its handkerchiefs over its mouths. On the whole *Le Sang d'un Poete* was a piece of far-fetched good fun. But to seek undue profundity in its imagery would have been to take too seriously the trials and errors of a man whose trade was other than films.

A translated film version of Cocteau's play *La Mort du Sphinx* has now appeared in England. Cocteau himself, it seems, had no direct contact with the production. The play was adapted by Stuart Gilbert (noted for his book on James Joyce) and directed by Lewis Carls, with music by Georges Auric. Except for the central figure of the Sphinx, played by Ingrid Bigum, the small cast is wholly English.

The interest of *La Mort du Sphinx* lies, at least in part, in the smooth interweaving of contemporary reference with a classical theme. Its situations, especially when translated into terms of film, call for a modicum of flippancy and coarseness in their handling. They demand, in most cases, an approach closer to the spirit of music-hall than to that of Greek drama.

It is therefore regrettable that the film should be so obviously governed by an enormous reverence for its original. It is permeated with a spirit of discipleship which tunes it to a false aesthetic pitch. Thus Stuart Gilbert's adaptation consists in little more than a mere removal of un-essential dialogue, while Lewis Carls' direction gives the appearance of being dictated by a consuming fear lest each of the remaining lines should pass without its due weight. Auric's music, which could have played a fundamental part in the dramatic construction of the film is confined to a few insignificant passages, mostly of a punctuative nature. The result is a pompous, stagey affair, full of the odour of sanctity and outrageously dull.

There is no reason why this should have been so. The Cocteau play contains much of the stuff of imaginative movie and his writing is vivid, pointed, and at times racy. In addition his theme touches on one of the major stories of all time. Opportunities were not lacking, and the names of the production team should have been a guarantee that they would be taken. Or should they? The feeling lingers that the film represents an excursion into a foreign field of a group of intellectuals whose native media lie elsewhere. Maybe there is something in professionalism after all.

★ *Paris Commune*

(Gregory Roshal—Russian.)
N. Plotnikov, A. Maximova, A. Abrikosov, V. Stanitzin.

Paris Commune is a lacklustre, awkwardly directed and generally tedious piece of historical sugar-coating. With a transparent list to port and a patriotic fist conveniently clamped over one eye, the Soviet looks at the abortive insurrection in Paris in 1871, directly after the Franco-Prussian War, and pretends it was the idealistic precursor to the Red revolution. It is all glory for the Paris Commune and for those who died fighting for it on the barricades. And yet—although the filmmakers charitably ignore the debauchery, brutality and vandalism of the commune—it is unable to hide, even in this subjective treatment, inklings of the stupidity, ineptness and confusion of the revolution's leaders. To this extent it is an accurate picture of a bloody and worthless sixty-five days' war. Aside from our factual scruples, there remains the more cogent objection that *Paris Commune* is a singularly dispirited, over-attenuated and static motion picture. It emerges as the flat record of a revolution fought by soap-box orators and directed by misfits. None of the players deserves special mention, but its director, Gregory Roshal, does: he has much to learn.

—Frank S. Nugent, *The New York Times*

★ *Mr. Flow*

(Robert Siodmak—French.)
Edwige Feuillère, Fernand Gravey, Louis Jouvet.

French crook drama is a screen rarity. I found this interesting partly on that account, but more because of the very attractive and intelligent young actress, Edwige Feuillère. There is a strong boudoir flavour to the complicated non-moral pilot of a lady thief and a barrister who becomes entangled in every way. Some good Deauville scenes and fascinating acting by a clever cast are put over by a technique which I like chiefly because it has so little in common with either Hollywood or Denham.

—P. L. Mannock, *The Daily Herald*

Emil Jannings **"Der Herrscher"**

★ *Der Herrscher*

(Veit Harlan—German.)
Emil Jannings, Marianne Hoppe.

Der Herrscher is a good, strong drama in which the German passion for accuracy and precise detail is used to good purpose except in the opening. This is a burial scene, in which the emotionalism is laid on with a trowel. Once this is over, the picture becomes intensely interesting. It reveals a psychologically correct building of character. Being of German origin, the story is unrelieved by those flashes of humour which British or American production would have given it. But its very grimness gives it a strength that becomes an additional quality. Here and there, an attempt to please Der Fuhrer is disclosed. The almighty eminence of the State and the good of the people above the good of the individual are emphasised, but not obnoxiously. One rather smiles. —Richard Haestier, *The Star*

Jannings is a dominating steelworks magnate who is used to having his own way. He falls in love with his young secretary, proposes to her and rounds on his family when they insult her because they wanted his money.

For the most part the film is a family row, by a set of quite unpleasant people, pictured with little regard to convincing characterisation and put there mainly to give Jannings the chance of building up to a powerful scene, as he has done many times in the past.

He acts well, but the general lack of human values and the flood of dialogue prevent the picture from being really satisfying.

—A. Jympson Harman, *The Evening News*

Sorry you've been troubled!

"Stars are just merchandise to me—they're canned and sent all over the country; liked baked beans."—Robert D. Wilby, cinema-owner, of Atlanta, Georgia.

There's only one improvement we can make to that crack, Mr. Wilby. You should have said "half-baked."

But we may as well face up to the fact, kiddies, that that is just how our stars *are* sent all over the country. And that, also, is how they are brought to you by Uncle Exhibitor, the man who owns your cinema.

Lean back, little ones, and shake the hair out of your ears while I tell you just how Uncle Exhibitor does it.

Waking from a heavy stupor induced by smoking too many free cigars, he realises that it is Market Day and he must go out shopping. For there are no films in the larder and he has so many tiny mouths to feed, great big maternal thing that he is.

So he takes his little shopping basket and off he skips to market, pausing only to write a few rude words on a wall or to kick some defenceless dog in the slats.

Soon he is at the Film Grocer's shop (shall we call him the Distributor, just for fun ?)

"Good morning, Mr. Distributor," he lisps.

"Good morning, my little man," says the Distributor, smiling indulgently and patting the little man across the ear with a can of banned film. "And what can I do for you?"

"I want some baked beans," says the Exhib.

"Why yes," comes back the Distributor. "The same as last time, of course?"

The Exhibitor sucks his thumb sulkily.

"The last lot I had from you was bad," he petulates.

"Oh, it was, was it?" says the other, sharp like. "It's the same as you always have."

"I know. But the customers say it made them feel sick."

"Listen, sweetheart," says the Distributor, stamping hard on the Exhibitor's toe; "you tell your customers they can take what I give 'em, and like it. Why, do you know there are some people who never see pictures at all? Take the Orkneys——"

"Couldn't you send them by your van?" asks the Exhib.

"In the Orkneys they never see motion pictures, much." Here a big tear rolls down the Distributor's cheek and burns a hole in the counter.

Touched by this, the Exhibitor scampers off, his little basket bulging in the most exciting way with his tins of baked beans. And once he's got them home, it takes him no time to present them to you in a big sticky glutinous meal which lasts for several hours and is guaranteed to linger for many more in that enormous hollow tooth known as the movie-goer's mind.

You must excuse me now. I'm off to the Orkneys.

GIRLS, PLEASE!

A headmistress at the recent conference of the Association of Headmistresses at Brighton, asked whether the talkies had contributed to the ruin of taste in English.

"Our whole soul revolts," she said, "against the abbreviations of alien growth and the soulless inventions of such vulgarities as 'debunk.'"

Monica, Monica, *please*,
We know that your're rather a tease—
But now you're a prefect you really must take
Your language in hand, for the other girls' sake.
Only last Tuesday, at tea
I heard you exclaiming "Sez me!"
And as your Headmistress I say that it hurts
When you answer my questions by saying "Aw nerts."

Monica, Monica, dear,
Explain to me, now that your're here
What is meant by your saying "you'll debunk the Head"?
Does it mean you intend to pull me from my bed?
For the good of your colleagues in class
I can't let such crudities pass—
And I don't think it speaks very well for our coll.,
When you call the games-mistress a "four-flushing moll."

Monica, Monica, curb
The use of such horrors as "blurb"
The rest of the staff and myself are not sure,
But we feel that the word sounds distinctly impure.
And Monica, Monica, pray
What do you mean when you say
That you'll make Elsie Higgins "come clean?" For our regs.
Say a bath every day for the girls of St. Peg's.

Monica, Monica, check
Such sayings as "pain in the neck."
We don't mind occasional rags in the dorm,
But we *do* think your language a trifle too warm.
For Monica, Monica, dear,
It doesn't just jar on the ear—
It will look oh! so bad in your English exam,
And now get to hell out of here—go on scram!

(*Continued from Column Three*)

in a few years' time. All around us will be the new generation of cinemagoers—grown-ups; booing, hissing and cheering without restraint. We may be just a bunch of dumb, comatose old fluffs, but if anyone starts booing, hissing or cheering around us, there had better be a doctor in the house. One who can fix fractures.

We take our films seriously. Like Miss Lejeune.

"Do not disturb me."—*Mae West.*
HOW ARE THE MEATY FALLEN!

For the Little Ones

(Not you Mr. Hitchcock)

Britain's children may soon have their own cinemas, with their own "C" films, and with signs posted up: "No Grown-ups Admitted."—News Item.

A pretty kettle of fish, I must say. After all, what's good enough for our children should be good enough for us, what? Or is this the kind of conversation we will have to listen to from our progeny as they sip a stiff Scotch apiece on their return from the movies:

Michael: Pretty lousy picture, eh, Monica?

Monica: Definitely erotic. But I can't say I was convinced by that drug-taking scene.

Michael: Good lord, no. That woman had obviously never been really coked in her life.

Monica: Rather pathetic. Not a bad jag the hero goes on, though. He got pretty nicely bazooned.

Michael: Not really crying drunk, though. Like I was on Speech Day.

Monica: Not so loud, old boy. Here are the parents on their way to bed. You know how they dream if we tell them anything. I've got rather a ripping chapter of Freud to finish and I'm for hitting the hay myself. It's been one hell of a day.

And listen to this:

"Far too many mothers fail to realise that their children would be happier going by themselves. Alone, they boo, hiss, shout, cheer and laugh without restraint. There is no danger—in this way—of their developing into the dumb, comatose type represented by the average cinemagoer."

—An official of the British Film Institute.

Well, that's just dandy. Going to the pictures is evidently going to be a lot of fun

(*Continued at Foot of Previous Column*)

LORUM

By Rodney Hobson

Taboo or not Taboo

Hollywood has been surveying the world market and finding the outlook, mainly for political and censorship reasons, discouraging. The producer's problem is that every country has different taboos.

France does not object to an individual French villain, but will not tolerate a reflection on the French nation. Italy will not accept an Italian character who is not the hero.

China complains that Chinese are usually shown as coolies. Quebec will not allow even a reference to divorce. Japan will tolerate no reflection on authority. Scandinavia bans crime and cruelty.

Great Britain is regarded as touchy in the matter of cruelty to animals and bedroom scenes.—News Item.

You will never win the Frenchman's homage
If you show too many of them as being pieces
of fromage.

Though all Italians at heart are Neroes
They prefer to see themselves as heroes.

If you show one of their compatriots as a
coolie
A Chinese audience gets quite unroolie.

In order to appeal to the Teuton
Never show a character with a Non-Aryan
seut on.

If your dialogue mentions a decree nisi
Your reception in Quebec will be isi.

The Japs
Are authority-loving chaps.

For Scandinavia
Your characters should be on their best
behavia.

And if there's one thing a British audience is
constantly dreading
It's a picture that gives them even a glimpse
of bedding.

Sayings

"In every woman there is a little of the angel and a little of the devil."

—Ernst Lubitsch

Sure you mean a *little* of the latter, Mr. Lubitsch?

"Clothes should not be important to an actress."—*Dita Parlo*

Really, Miss Parlo! And just as we were getting our actresses accustomed to wearing them again.

SHUT UP CECIL !

There stood host Cecil Beaton illuminated alternately by flares from incessant fireworks and the flashes of photographers' lamps. He wore a white dress, covered with vegetation and beetles, but composed chiefly of broken eggs—egg shells broken in half with complete white and yolk glazed to the costume.

By the end of the evening Mr. Beaton had changed his fancy dress three times—ending up as a scarecrow.—*News Item*

No need to have changed three times if you wanted to finish up as a scarecrow, Mr. Beaton.

* * *

Mrs. Greiser's little boy Snooks, W.F.N.'s malicious lift-boy, put Lord Strabolgi on the spot yesterday.

Snooks: "So you are advocating not only British control, but also British policy for the Industry, hey?"

Lord S.: "We owe it to our compatriots—"

Snooks: "No more films about Vienna or the South Seas, hey?"

Lord S.: "Don't misunderstand me—."

Snooks: "And what's going to happen to the Argentines, the Americans and the Greeks who run the racket? Only Englishmen can starve like gentlemen. Third floor, unexplored avenues, sound bases, unturned stones, and *World Film News*."

O, Tell Me the Inside Story

Animated diagrams of a skeleton drinking from a glass, showing the various digestive processes, and X-ray moving pictures of the movements of the lungs, are among the many films used in this country in the modern practice of medicine.—*News Item.*

Accustomed as we are
To gazing upon the usual exposed portions
of a film-star—
Such as the eyes, ears, nose, etcetera—
We feel that it would be a lot betterer
If, by this X-ray idea,
We could peer
Into the internal workings of these fascinating
creatures
Instead of at their more obvious features.
How much better to witness,
As a change from mere pritness,
The effect upon a film-queen's digestion
Of the suggestion
That there are some very interesting etchings
upstairs,
If she cares ? . . .
Or to watch the reaction of her left lung
To an embrace from, shall we say, Robert
Young ?
And we might
Also be vouchsafed the delight
Of studying the inside
Of a film-star who has had to swallow his
pride—
Which, if we guess rightly,
Would pack it pretty tightly.

" But don't you *want* to be a star, Miss Postlethwaite ? "

NEWSREEL RUSHES

"A Wide Open Letter to Mr. G. T. Cummins . . . Editor of British Paramount News"

by Glen Norris

This is the first of a series of articles in which our contributor submits the British Newsreels to candid and constructive criticism.

W.F.N. publishes this as a valuable discussion of the merits and faults of our reels, although we do not necessarily endorse every opinion of the writer. Mr. G. T. Cummins will no doubt have something to say in reply to the comments in this article.

Dear Mr. Editor Cummins,

I am deeply interested in the newsreels. I firmly believe that some day they will find a way of really showing the world all the important and exciting things, in the tremendous marching pageant of history in the making. But I don't kid myself that any of Britain's reels are doing that now. All of them are much too much alike in repeating year after year the same sporting and military calendar—the same formula of "Derby—Trooping the Colour—Wimbledon." By living in continuous holy terror of the controversial boo or hiss, they achieve too great a uniformity of dullness. It's almost as if they had a secret agreement amongst themselves not to compete in finding the most dramatic stories. But even in the narrow field in which they work, each of our five reels has its own subtle flavour—each is stamped with the personality of its commentators and cutters, and above all, of its editor. You have brought many shining qualities to Paramount. I think your shoulders are also broad enough to bear the burden of some of its faults.

Planned Shooting

I'm told that you were once a cameraman. Maybe that's why camera work is the outstanding feature of your reel. Obviously your past experience enables you to pick the best men to put behind your cameras, to plan every detail of your shooting ahead, and thus to achieve an ordered dovetailing of the work of several men on the same story. You visualise your story on a mental screen, days before the shooting begins. Some months back, I remember a little story that in itself hadn't much in the way of drama or beauty—just two or three R.A.F. flying boats taking off on some routine long distance flight. But your cameras made it a thrilling experience—with close-ups of flashing propellors, and foam framed floats, and skimming water, and the urgent faces of pilots. It was a miniature speed symphony—*made* by the picture. And Paramount's annual news programme is filled with such sparkling items.

Exclusive Feature

But even the finest shooting, and the best plans, go wrong with badly designed or out-of-date equipment—and here too I suspect that your past experience has a great deal to do with Paramount's lead on the battle front. Time and again, in front of Buckingham Palace or at the Aldershot Tattoo, I have been struck with the neatness, compactness, elasticity, and portability of your camera and sound units. Time and again, I have heard rival cameramen grunt over the lip of a glass: "If I make a mess of it I can always blame the old camera—but those poor Paramount lads haven't an alibi in the world."

A piece of equipment, experimental, and at the moment, I believe, exclusive to Paramount, is a portable camera dolly—a form of tripod on wheels. With it the camera can "walk around" while actually shooting. A few recent striking dolly shots: a model of a ship in a glass case, with the camera slowly moving round it, like an idle spectator; the effect of "roaming the decks" of a battleship during the Coronation Naval Review; the camera gliding towards some top-hatted gentleman as if saying "excuse me, but would you care to say a word or two," then stopping at the close-up for a camera interview. I predict that Paramount's dolly experiment will soon be widely adopted.

Organisation for Speed

Once the pictures are "in the can," the final success of the job depends on the speed with which the negative can be rushed back to London. Twelve hours lost—and it may not even be worth developing. Twelve hours gained—and it may make headlines. For, like a newspaper, a newsreel scooping its rivals with a big story, reaps its reward in prestige and publicity—and here, too, Paramount is often in the winning class.

Your world-wide network for collecting and transporting film is a wonder and a thorn to all who compete against it. Is it a funeral in Omsk Litomsk? You find a plane to fly the pictures back a little faster. Is it the weekly trans-Atlantic newsreel race? Maybe you still remember the story of how, at the U.S. end, they all missed the "Queen Mary" by inches. The others sat back to wait for the "Normandie," sailing a couple of days later. But meanwhile the Paramount transport sleuths found an obscure Italian cargo boat, leaving within an hour, and with just a chance of playing tortoise and hare with the "Normandie." On her way home, the Italian called at some small Irish port—the films were landed, thrown to a waiting plane, and with the "Normandie" steaming down the Channel, Paramount had beaten the field by ten hours!

Faults?

Many a time, through the year, you get better pictures, and you get them on to the screens first. *And yet* . . . . Do you always make the best of those initial advantages? Do you always put over your stories in the newsiest, most effective way? I don't think so! I think there are faults in the make-up of your finished reel.

Cutting

To me, your cutting still shows signs of the "old silent style." A hang-over from the days when the picture had to tell the story—and every detail had to be hammered home in close-up. Do you remember? The enemies meet at last—closer up of face with murderous intentions—close-up of terror-stricken victim—close-up of revolver being slowly drawn from pocket—and so on, for reel after reel. But in the modern, fast moving newsreel, the continuity of the story is covered by the commentator.

In its 100 feet, or less, the picture can, and should, do little more than illustrate the most telling incidents of the story—*and only those*. Every shot should be a super-shot—every cut-in should pull its weight in building up the atmosphere—every foot of film that falls below those standards should be junked. You still give us, in the name of continuity, far too many shots of closed cars dashing by, while we strain to glimpse the face inside—far too many shots of notabilities, almost wholly obscured by flunkeys, getting in and out of carriages—far too many cut-ins that are obviously posed. Never mind if you show The King in Edinburgh in one shot, and in Glasgow in the next. The commentator can carry the story across—and we shall applaud its speed. Above all, your reel needs more speed—and the first step in that direction would be to cut all those continuity "sustaining" shots—and leave their message to the commentator. I believe you would find that on an average one third of the footage of each story had been thrown overboard. Then you could set about filling up that length with more, newer, different, stories—and Paramount News would have the kick of a rocket.

Commentary

Talking of commentaries—are yours good enough? I say commentaries—not commen*tators*. I am glad that you have two voices because I don't believe that a single one can cover the full range of emotions of the world's news. To your two voices I should even like to see added a third with a light, tripping quality for comedy, and a fourth, a bass, for big drama.

But above all, I should like to see a reform in the writing of the commentaries. How consistently we are forced to listen to a description of the obvious—to such supremely unnecessary remarks as "Prince Blank drives through the streets"; or "the vast crowd cheers"; or "His Majesty inspects the troops." How often, when a title superimposed on the picture tells us we are in

NEWSREEL RUSHES

Paris, does the commentary take the word out of the title's mouth.

Your commentary writers consistently fail to realise that film commentary is not a form of radio description to blind listeners. It is a vocal counterpoint to a picture—and as such should deal with the more general implications of a story—its meaning, its place in history. Only rarely need film commentary point out a rapid or unclear bit of action in the picture—and then the description must come a second or two before the action, to allow for time lag in audience brains. When there's nothing to say—rather than hopeless vocal padding, far better for commentary to give place to sound and music.

Sound and Music

Faster cutting, more informative commentary, will increase your speed 100 per cent. But your reel's final swing comes from music. Your sound units bring in thousands of feet of natural sound and music every week. But I don't believe you fully realise that ninety per cent of that track isn't sufficiently interesting to help build up your story. Certain sounds—the yells of the watchers at the Hindenburg burning, or the roar of the children at the Wembley Youth Festival—are tremendous in themselves. But the rest needs the artificial boost of added library music—music that is specially composed or arranged to provide atmosphere and rhythm. Your audience very soon reacts to the dullness of prolonged general traffic hubbub, or the continuous roar of a football crowd—yet these and similar sounds still play a regular part in your reel's make-up.

Faster . . . Faster

All my criticism points in one main direction—your reel is *not fast enough*. I believe you will find that the key to *more speed* is *less repetition*—in cutting, through the elimination of all but the absolutely essential shots—in commentary, through the elimination of all wording that is already covered by the picture—in sound, by the elimination of repetitive general hubbub.

Yours sincerely,

Glen Norris.

1. *Following tear gas and shooting, demonstrators break and run*

Notes by the Commentator

Frightful Film

Biggest newsstory in America to-day, is the upheaval of labour, manifested in sit-downs, stand-ups, and all their variations. But during months of political tension, the American newsreels have found little dramatic material for their cameras. Fighting clashes have broken out too unexpectedly, and have been suppressed too quickly for anything but sheer luck to bring a camera within shooting distance. Last month luck smiled on Orlando Lippert, ace cameraman of U.S. Paramount News. Almost as if he smelled blood in the air, Lippert stayed behind in Chicago's steel suburb, while his rival cameras went off to the Indianapolis car race. Thus Paramount got a complete exclusive record of

2. *Policeman seen here goes for a fallen striker*

one of the bloodiest labour-police battles in U.S. history. So clearly does the negative show police brutality that it was immediately confiscated by the U.S. government, and American audiences will never see it.

A few of the less harrowing shots were released by British Paramount News in this country, and, although they are almost the least dramatic sections of the complete film, they are still amazing enough to qualify easily as the news pictures of the month. Shown: a shot of a policeman felling a man with a club, then continuing to strike the prostrate figure, before passing on to the next attack. Not shown: shots of the first line of strikers going down under a police volley, like grass under a scythe; a terrified girl clambering to escape over a heap of fallen men, then felled by a police club blow, later lifted into an ambulance, a crumpled, bleeding heap; a man shot through the spine and paralysed from the waist, unable to move his legs, raising his head like a tortoise and clawing the ground. In its report on the affair, the U.S. magazine *Time* quotes the comment of one man who saw the film: "It made me want to go out and bite a policeman."

3. *. . . and clubs prostrate body*

Newsreel Cockalorum

A train ran into a siding at Swanley Junction near London. The coaches piled up into a hideous mess—out of which doctors and nurses dragged the bodies of the dead and dying. Paramount News released the usual aftermath pictures—over them the commentator spoke words which Editor Cummins regarded as too obviously true to be controversial. General line of the commentary was that such a pile-up would largely have been avoided with steel coaches. But controversy raised its ugly head! The Association of Timber Manufacturers made a strong protest, implying that such propaganda as had been spoken by the Paramount commentator was likely to do considerable harm to the Timber Trade. If they were to continue to hold their own in a hard world, it was essential that timber should continue to be used for railway coaches. So far the obvious next moves have not taken place—but Paramount are daily expecting: a "revelation" that the commentator is really a big shareholder in a major steel company: a similar protest against damaging propaganda from the United Association of Undertakers and Coffin Builders.

New Newsreel

For years newsreel editors have been saying: "If one reel closed down, another would open up. There'll always be room for five." Apparently they have never discussed whether there is room for six reels—but this question is soon to be tested. The recent news of the resignation of long time Universal Editor Cecil Snape, was soon followed by the announcement of a new newsreel. *National News*, when it starts up in October, will be under the financial control of the Sound City studio group, headed by Norman Loudon, Sound City Chairman. Snape will edit—in the, to him, unfamiliar world of natural sound. For unlike Universal, National News is to have its fleet of sound trucks. In a later issue of *W.F.N.* it is hoped to detail the policy of the new organisation.

Meanwhile at Universal, Managing Director Jeapes adds the editorship to his executive burden.

PEOPLE WITH PURPOSES

The Travel Association

EVERY day, every week, every month a stream of literature pours out from Government Department and political faction, uplift society and industrial group. Plans, ideas, notions for getting something (almost anything) done, provided nearly always that someone else does the getting done: the letter-box of anyone working in the field of propaganda is choked with plans for getting someone else to get something done.

But sometimes the receiver of this flood of unfulfilled plans is encouraged. This week, for example, a shy little booklet in pale green, emblazoned with a skimpy sort of lion with the face of an old man, and containing only two pages, has appeared. When one reads it, one can forgive a whole cascade of useless literature. For it contains a record by the Travel and Industrial Association of a steady and long-term campaign of film production and distribution.*

For all its shortness, the booklet holds, not a splurge of ideas of what *might* be done, but a neat set of paragraphs outlining an achievement of film making and distribution of which any organisation with ten times the money might be proud. For the Travel and Industrial Association, often, one imagines, discouraged by the inelastic imaginations of some of those who guide our national policies of propaganda, has built up a genuine and far-reaching international circulation of British films.

* Films of Britain: a Report of National Screen Publicity by The Travel and Industrial Development Association of Great Britain and Ireland.

The Travel and Industrial Association is financed by small grants from the Department of Overseas Trade, local authorities, certain cities and major industries, and by private subscription. Its object is to encourage a service of information about England to people overseas; not only holiday England, but industrial and commercial England as well. To achieve this object, the Association early turned to films, realising with imagination remarkable four years ago, and still all too rare, that films give access to the friendly and sympathetic interest of ordinary people. The Association has been restricted in finance, it has been shaken by the suspicions (equalled only on the Russian-Japanese border) of neighbouring seaside towns; it has been hampered by lack of sympathy on the part of

Government and industrial highhats who should know better. But under the guidance of L. A. de L. Meredith and A. F. Primrose and their colleagues, it has been persistent and active.

It started off film production by making two films somewhere about 1933 or 1934. They were *So This is London* and *So This is Lancashire*, but with their completion the Association's troubles were just beginning. It is easier to make films than to distribute them. So the Association set to work to create a system of distribution of its own. It found that it could handle a group of six films more easily than two. So, says the report, further films were therefore produced.

Just that, "further films were therefore produced." But what a struggle must be hidden in those few words. Two films were not successful by themselves. So they made some more in the face of goodness knows what derision and discouragement and gents of the old school of propaganda saying, "we must give them more bathing beauties." But a further batch of films produced by them, including *Beside the Seaside*, *For All Eternity*, and *The Key to Scotland* wiped, the supercilious smile off the face of the Association's critics. The Travel and Industrial Association persisted and succeeded.

To-day the Association is able to publish a list of twenty-eight countries which show its films in the public cinemas, and fifteen which show them non-theatrically. It has built up contacts with Anglo-Foreign Associations, and has recently circulated through the Foreign Office and the Department of Overseas Trade a list of documentary films available abroad. A Joint Committee of the British Council, the Travel and Industrial Association, the Foreign Office, the Department of Overseas Trade, the Film Institute and John Grierson (of Film Centre), has been set up under the chairmanship of Philip Guedalla to further its activities.

It is to be hoped that the Association's period of shoe-string finance is over. For now the Empire Marketing Board is dead, the Travel and Industrial Association is the only group not under obligation to specialised commercial or political interests in a position to make detached films reflecting the national life of the country.

ARTHUR ELTON.

Stills from a Travel Association film of Edinburgh

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS IN SUB-STANDARD PICTURES

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(People with Purposes —contd.)

NEWS NOTES

In France several railway companies, especially the State organisation, are using films for instructing their workers.

* * *

Glasgow: The Corporation Health Committee has accepted the offers of Pathé and Paramount for the supply of sound films required at the mental hospitals.

* * *

Ireland: A sub-committee has been appointed to the Gaelic League to investigate the possibilities of launching an all-Gaelic film company.

Films played an important part in this year's International Housing Exhibition in Dublin.

* * *

Leeds: Open-air daylight shows have been given by the National Government touring van.

* * *

The Akele of Abeokuta visited Film House, Wardour Street, with a view to purchasing equipment for his council hall in Abeokuta. The hall holds over 1,800 people.

* * *

Stirling: A film, partly in colour, is being made of the work of restoring the ancient Church of the Holy Rood, for showing at the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow next year.

* * *

The Moscow Newsreel Studio has commenced production on a series of documentary sound films on Moscow.

Studios of Moscow, Leningrad and Novosibirsk are making a number of educational films on Soviet geography.

* * *

The first railway travelling cinema coach to be used on the British railways has made more than 1,200 journeys and covered 250,000 miles; approximately 60,000 passengers have seen the programme, made up of sub-standard news and pictorial films (projected from the rear). The coach operates between King's Cross and Leeds on weekdays, and on excursion trains to Northern towns on Sundays. A second cinema coach has now been introduced on the King's Cross and Doncaster service.

A mobile cinema van touring stations and depots to demonstrate instructional films of railway management to railwaymen, introduced last November, has travelled 7,000 miles, visited 68 stations and depots, and given 450 performances to more than 12,000 members of the staff.

* * *

A talkie set has been installed at the George Shepherd Convent in Belfast. Hitherto the convent has been content with hiring a portable set at intervals—but in view of the success it has had, the full set has been purchased.

* * *

The Moscow Technical Film Studio has started two films on football. One is designed to acquaint the public with the basic principles of the game, the other is a full-length instructive film to improve the play of less-experienced teams.

* * *

Dr. Martin Leake of Cambridge University recently asked Gaumont-British Instructional to make a slow-motion film of a new pattern seed-drill which was theoretically perfect, but which in practice developed a fault that prevented the emission of seeds. The slow-motion film revealed the cause of the difficulty, thus enabling the mechanism to be perfected.

* * *

Six farms in the Lothians provided the locations for *A Pure Milk Supply*, a film made by members of the Edinburgh and East of Scotland Agricultural College, and directed by Dr. Andrew Cunningham. Dr. J. E. Gordon acted as cameraman. The film provides an authoritative account of the production of milk, coupled with an urgent appeal for cleanliness.

* * *

Messrs. F. G. Warne, Ltd., are making a 16 mm. film for the Bristol Development Board, which will be entitled *Bristol, City of a Thousand Years*. Mr. D. F. Taylor is making a film of Bath for the Travel Association.

* * *

The Police Surgeon of Hull, Dr. John Cumming, has made a film featuring the city's constabulary. It will be preserved at headquarters as a record for future screenings.

* * *

A new film of the Oxford Group movement, made at the recent demonstration at Utrecht, Holland, had its first screening in Britain at a private display in Edinburgh. The audience comprised Scottish members of the Group.

* * *

G.B. Equipments, Ltd., have installed talkie apparatus in two of the League of Nation's conference halls. Their contract called for apparatus of the portable type for both 35 mm. and 16 mm. films, in addition to complete full-sized permanent plant.

A series of three travel films, *We Three in Argyll*, *Honeymoon Cruises*, and *The Road Through the Isles*, is being made by Mr. J. C. Elder and his wife, of Elder-Dalrymple Productions, for Messrs. MacBraynes of Glasgow, the West Highland Steamship Company. Mr. and Mrs. Elder are shooting in the highlands.

Cadbury's Film Library

35 MM. SOUND ON FILM

The Night Watchman's Story, 6,500 ft. (73 mins.). A film about the cocoa and chocolate industry showing how cocoa beans are grown and harvested on the Gold Coast and how they are used in making cocoa and chocolate at Bournville.

Country Fare, 1,700 ft. (19 mins.). A documentary film on some aspects of agriculture, such as the production of eggs, milk and barley to meet the growing demand for foods of this kind.

Work-a-day, 3,000 ft. (34 mins.). This film describes the workings of a modern food factory and shows the provisions made at Bournville for the recreation of employees.

Fascinating Facts, 750 ft. (8 mins.). A "believe-it-or-not" film, presenting some of the surprising facts and statistics about the Factory in a Garden.

The Gold Coast, 1,800 ft. (80 mins.). A film about native life and industries on the Gold Coast of British West Africa.

16 MM. SOUND ON FILM

The Night Watchman's Story, 4 reels (45 mins.). A shortened version of the 35 mm. film described above.

The Gold Coast, 2 reels (20 mins.). See description above.

Fascinating Facts, 1 reel (8 mins.). See description above.

16 MM. SILENT

The Night Watchman's Story, 4 reels (45 mins.). Abridged edition.

**Country Fare*, 2 reels (20 mins.). Abridged edition.

**Work-a-day*. 2 reels (20 mins.). Abridged edition.

Cocoa from the Gold Coast. 1 reel (8 mins.). A teaching film.

**Agriculture*, 1 reel (8 mins.). A teaching film.

9.5 MM. SILENT

A Day at Bournville, 1 reel (15 mins.).

The Cocoa Bean, 1 reel (15 mins.).

**Country Fare*, 1 reel (15 mins.).

* In course of preparation.

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"This little picture should find a place in the majority of our cinemas—it brings to the screen a section of British life that is all too dimly comprehended" *The Cinema*

"Documentary film of very real human interest" *The Era*

LAY PRESS

". . . a long step forward" *The Times*

". . . a poignant living picture" *The Star*

"This film makes history" *News Chronicle*

". . . one of the most remarkable documentary films yet made" *Daily Mirror*

" . . . should attract all British audiences" *Glasgow Herald*

"The best film I have seen during the past week" *Yorkshire Post*

"A brilliant short film" *Daily Herald*

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(People with Purposes—contd.)

FILM IN EDUCATION

Devon County Council Education Committee recently adopted recommendations to purchase sound projectors and to make grants towards the purchase of equipment and the hiring of educational films by schools. Whilst the projectors would be primarily for classroom use, they might be lent at intervals to the County Agricultural Department for experimental purposes.

* * *

In Southampton schoolrooms are to be built with a definite view to using them for film shows, and comprehensive plans are being made by the Education Committee for the adoption of modern scientific aids to teaching.

* * *

In Barnsley eight schools are equipped with projectors; last year one school showed over a hundred educational films. The King Edward VII Grammar School in Colville recently purchased talkie apparatus, and the Bradford Education Committee has made a grant of £20 for a projector to the Gregory Girls' School. In Torquay a sound projector has been installed in every assembly hall, and a silent projector in every school in Audley Park.

* * *

Boys belonging to the Sherwood Congregational School in Nottingham have completed a four-reel silent film *My Friend Smith*, financed by The Religious Film Society.

* * *

17,000 schools in Germany are equipped with apparatus for showing educational films.

* * *

In Canada arrangements are being made to establish a film library for free circulation of educational pictures of the Empire among schools.

* * *

At a meeting of the Dundee Education Committee a letter was read from the Scottish Film Council, asking financial assistance towards the setting up of a Glasgow office, with a full-time manager, for the purpose of administering educational films in Scotland, giving advice on the formation of libraries of educational films, and assisting in the work of arranging vacation courses for teachers. At these classes teachers will be able to learn the technique of using a projector and keep in touch with latest developments.

The Committee's decision was deferred until they had an indication of how other cities were treating similar requests.

* * *

Followers of continental films will be interested to hear of an addition to cinemas showing these films in the West End: the Berkeley Cinema, in Lansdowne Row. It is small, but probably provides the most suited accommodation to the policy of the proprietors, which is to present new films produced in countries other than England and the United States. Under the direction of Count Ostrorog, it has made a successful beginning with *Der Herrscher*, German Prize Film of 1936 (see *Review of Reviews*), and hopes to keep up the standard with productions of Sacha Guitry, Willy Forst, Gustav Froelich, and other of the recognised continental directors.

Teaching by Film and Radio— A League of Nations Effort

The following report by Miss M. Locket is on the work of the Cinema Sub-Committee at the Conference of Committees of Intellectual Co-operation recently held in Paris.

A "Month of Intellectual Co-operation" is now in progress in Paris under the ægis of the International Institute for Mutual Co-operation of the League of Nations. Of the various subject committees, the one round which centred popular interest was the advisory committee on League of Nations Teaching. This year its deliberations were concerned mainly with teaching by cinema and radio.

Suggestions had been invited from various national organisations and individuals and on these each sub-committee—one devoted to cinema and the other to radio—produced recommendations for the consideration of the Intellectual Co-operation Organisation.

As regards cinema, probably the most interesting of these recommendations is that designed to extend to further categories of films the exemptions from customs dues provided for in the League convention of 1933. These exemptions facilitate international circulation of films of educational character.

After considering how best to induce those Governments who have not yet signed or ratified the Convention to do so—"notably those more important States whose example is so necessary to encourage other adhesions," the committee outlined these proposed categories:

Films, so-called entertainment, but of high artistic and cultural standards.

Films faithfully representing the spirit of the country producing them and which consequently could contribute to a better knowledge of and reciprocal esteem between peoples.

Sections of newsreels of similar interest.

The next recommendation dealt with:

National Activities: Here the Sub-Committee suggests that though the role of the film is international, the Assembly should consider drawing the attention of Governments to certain measures calculated to develop national activities in such a way that the effect upon international activities could not but be favourable. It noted as of interest in this connection:

The role of national institutes and the important effect of Governments encouraging these activities where they already exist and wherever possible supplying additional funds for their support.

The creation of such institutes where they do not yet exist.

The important effects to be achieved from public bodies granting to such institutes all possible facilities for improving relations with similar national film institutes.

The importance of establishing closest relations between such institutes and national committees of Intellectual Co-operation.

Finally the sub-committee dealt with *International Activities*. It is suggested that the Intellectual Institute of Educational Cinematography at Rome, together with the International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation could undertake the following tasks:

To study the means of extending the categories of films benefiting from the International Convention.

To assist when necessary the creation of national film institutes, and to provide them with information, especially that based on experience gained elsewhere.

To assist relations between such institutes and to promote conferences of representatives.

To undertake a further study of the measures recommended by the Rome Congress of 1934 and to suggest a programme of action to give effect to this.

The suggestions received by the committee from various institutions and individuals, notably those of M. Jean Benoit-Lévy, the British Film Institute of London, A. de Cavalcanti, M. Van Staveren of Holland, etc. were considered with much interest.

Swedish Films for Colleges

John Hay Whitney, President of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, announces the arrival of a group of important motion picture films from Sweden, acquired through the courtesy of the Svensk Filmindustri. The most familiar to American audiences will probably be *Gösta Berling's Saga* (The story of Gösta Berling), in which Greta Garbo plays one of the principal roles. This film, directed in 1923-24 by Mauritz Stiller, stars Lars Hanson: Greta Garbo plays opposite him, and Gerda Lundequist-Dahlstrom is also featured. The film is eight reels long and has recently been synchronised with music. Students of the cinema will be interested to compare Garbo's appearance and acting in this her first important film with her later work in America.

When Mauritz Stiller, one of the greatest Swedish directors, was brought to America in 1925 to direct, he insisted that Garbo be put under contract by the same motion picture company. He recognised her potentialities and watched over her career. Before Stiller died in 1928 Garbo had attained the prominence he foresaw for her.

Victor Seastrom and Mauritz Stiller were the two greatest Swedish directors. It was largely their work which gave the Swedish film international prominence in the years immediately after the War and before the German films attracted attention. Seastrom came to America to direct films in 1923 and Stiller in 1925.

A series of programmes composed of the Swedish films brought over and of American films will be shown in New York next season by the Museum of Modern Art and will be circulated by the Film Library to museums, colleges and study groups throughout American and in Canada.

LETTERS

A letter to Robert Flaherty from Quatsino, British Columbia

We have a little Pulp town (Port Alice) of about 800 population alongside this Port. It has its little Church on the Hill, further down the hill is the Movie "Palace"—seats a bit hard. The former with its little congregation and good Padre every Sunday, the latter with its *large* "congregation" twice a week. The best films arriving about six months after release.

Being the oldest timer I have watched this grow up all around me and have the honour of the friendship of a few, and the acquaintance of many of the population. In regard to the reaction to the films it seems to me this little community represents a fair cross-section of the rest of humanity. The mental range runs from the College graduate to the Japanese Cooley. Two distinct races; a number of nationalities; Catholics; Christian Science; and besides the Anglican Church on the hill.

Our fellow human beings are always entertainment to me and the opportunity here to know many at close quarters and their reactions to the movie seems excellent. Generally speaking the only mission, or result of the movie, is its three hours entertainment, something directly opposite from the daily grind of work; what the "show" was week before last and its effects are entirely forgotten. The audience still keeps up but I notice a steady demand for something more.

The wonderful advance in the mechanical art of movie science; a new twist to romance now and again; informative newsreels, and these are all now quite expected and if the Feature is not top notch you hear an increase of adverse comments next day.

For each picture there is a sameness more or less in the comments—"Acting fairly good"; "Not much"; "So and so done the part very . . ."; etc. Once in a very great while we get a picture with what I call a "Kick." A special adventure like your wonderful *Man of Aran* or more particularly *Green Pastures*. Over this latter there was considerable controversy, a new set of ideas was touched this time.

To my mind some sort of a "kick" will always be necessary in the future to keep the wonderful drama in its leading rôle. When I tell the good Padre one of the functions of the mighty movie of the future will be to help him out, he thinks I'm getting a bit radical.

B. W. LEESON

And Robert Flaherty's reply

Dear Mr. Leeson,

I read with great interest your description of audiences and their attitude towards films. The constructive interest which you show is one of the hopes for the future of the motion picture.

There is published now in England a magazine which I believe is the first good motion picture magazine to be published anywhere in the world. I am asking them to send it to you with my compliments.—Yours sincerely,

ROBERT FLAHERTY

Judicial Murder basis for film

A film which is based on a definite social incident, almost contemporary, is still sufficiently uncommon to be worth emphasising. From this point of view *Winterset*, the film taken from a play by Maxwell Anderson, has hardly had the attention it deserves, referring as it does to one of the foulest judicial crimes in living memory.

On April 15th, 1920, in the small town of South Braintree, Massachusetts, two men carrying the weekly pay-roll to the shoe factory of Messrs. Slater and Morrill were shot dead by bandits in broad daylight and the money stolen. On May 5th, 1920, two Italians, Nicola Sacco, shoemaker, and Bartolomeo Vanzetti, fish-pedlar, were arrested, and in July, 1921, they were convicted of the crime. They were executed in August, 1927.

There was no direct evidence against them. After their conviction fresh evidence came to light which not only cleared them of the crime, but pointed clearly to the actual murderers, but their every application for a fresh trial was refused by the Judge who tried them. The Judge's name was Webster Thayer. But they were radicals, anarchists, pacifists, arrested at a time of tremendous anti-radical feeling in the U.S.A. Ignorant of the crime for which they were arrested, fearful that it was because of their radical activities, knowing that one of their anarchist friends had just fallen to his death in some unknown manner from the fourteenth floor window of Police Headquarters, they lied to the Police, tried to conceal their recent movements. This "consciousness of guilt" seems to have been the main evidence upon which the conviction of murder was based.

Many of these points are duly brought out in *Winterset*. Quite naturally the film makes no direct mention of Sacco or Vanzetti; the circumstances of the murder and trial are varied; only one man is convicted of the crime; and the film is mainly concerned to trace a subsequent hypothetical meeting between the son of the executed man, the Judge, driven crazy by conscience, the actual murderer, and the Portuguese boy whose evidence, never admitted at the trial, would have cleared the innocent men.

But there is enough resemblance in the film to make the reference crystal clear. The date of the murder, 1920; the manner in which it was committed; the radical papers left in the car; the name of the accused man, BARTOLOMEO Romagna. But it is with the words of Romagna at his trial that all doubt ends. "In all my life I never stole and I never killed. I am an innocent man," says Romagna. "Not only am I innocent of these two crimes," said Vanzetti (he had been convicted of another robbery), "not only in all my life I have never stolen, never killed, never spilled blood, but I have struggled all my life, since I began to reason, to eliminate crime from the earth . . . even the crimes that the Law and the Church legitimate and sanctify." And Judge Gaunt preludes his sentencing of Romagna with almost the identical words of Judge Thayer. "There is only one thing left for this Court to do. It is not a matter of discretion, it is a matter of the Law. And that is to pronounce sentence."

Congratulations then to Radio for producing a picture which sincerely and conscientiously does honour to the memory of two men who were not only innocent of crime, but whose letters and speeches mark them out as men of outstanding principle and high courage. Only the Judge is too leniently treated. He is given a conscience. But a man who refused all applications for a new trial during seven years, who is reported to have told his golfing acquaintances that he was "going to get those anarchistic bastards," is not entitled to credit for so much.

STANLEY HAWES

Operators' hours and pay

It is interesting to note that Mr. Ernest Brown, the Minister of Labour, is to institute enquiries into the hours of work and conditions of labour connected with cinema attendants and cinematograph operators.

I would state on oath that I, at one time, had to work as many as 87 hours per week in a West End Super. These hours were made up as follows: Monday to Saturday, 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. (more often to 11.30 p.m.), Sunday (including afternoon stage rehearsals) 2 p.m. to 11 p.m., total 87 hours. In addition to this, it was not uncommon to work until 3 or 4 a.m. on a night trade show on two days during the week.

"Work Sundays, too?" I hear you say. Yes, this had to be done when acting as relief for men on holiday or sickness, and this was always done to cover the four operators engaged during the eight holiday weeks each year (two weeks each).

Did we grumble? No, we were well looked after and well paid, I for instance earning from £15 to £20 a week, but in time, the strain became too great and I resigned, I was "drunk" tired and was ready to sleep anywhere.

But this very day there is a cinema in the L.C.C. area which pays its chief operator £3 a week, the assistant a lad of 17, £1 a week with a very young boy to help, for a few shillings. When the Chief has his day off, the £1 a week worker, is on constant duty for nine hours, having his food on the machine, leaving the young boy in charge when he has to leave the box occasionally for other duties.

All this, despite the stringent Home Office and L.C.C. regulations, and you can take it from me, that the Minister of Labour will have his work cut out to get down to the basic facts.

A PROJECTIONIST

The following may be of interest to your readers.

According to Katherine Roberts in the June issue of "Stage" a playwright's royalties in the American theatre for the last three and a half years exclusively from stage productions and sales of the same plays to pictures (without any visit to Hollywood or further work on these plays) amounted to $527,416.08.

The playwright was Shakespeare.

JACK BEDDINGTON

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Television
by George Audit

IN a recent issue of WORLD FILM NEWS I complained that the figures on the television screen were much too small. If you want to follow the movements of your favourite ballerina it is exasperating to have to peer at a figure only four inches high which appears to be about thirty feet away. Actually the television camera may only be about ten feet from the subject but the image—when seen on a screen no bigger than a sheet of quarto paper—looks much more remote. In the theatre you may use glasses to get a better view of the actor but with television you are helpless to approach the subject.

The television close-up was first used with Gracie Fields' appearance a few weeks ago and was an immediate success. The subject may now be approached until her face more than fills the screen. The focusing is perfect so that the close-up makes a better picture merely from a photographic point of view. The odd and beautiful effects of light and shade obtainable in a television picture—so different from film equivalents—are not lost with the close-up, in fact they make it the more interesting.

The tiny size of the screen is a handicap. Projection, if only to twice the present size, would make all the difference. No doubt projection will have its problems and we shall be wondering whether to retire to bed and project the picture on to the ceiling for want of wallspace, and so on. But some enlargement of the present Lilliputian scale is absolutely essential.

* * * *

The volume of production at Alexandra Palace is obviously too great for present staff and equipment. You can see the makeshift in every programme. A single backcloth or no scenery at all. A wooden camera that does not follow its subjects unobtrusively but makes them approach it. Under-rehearsed or impromptu introductions and dialogue. A ridiculous slide of Alexandra Palace on a foggy morning for an interval sign. These criticisms are not necessarily any reflection on the present television staff who are making the best of a bad job. The fact is that the pressure of one programme on the heels of the next cuts out any possibility of thorough productions. Television simply has not got the money it needs.

Television now receives about £200,000 a year from the B.B.C. To develop it properly for the South of England alone would cost £1,000,000 a year. That sum would take all the B.B.C.'s programme appropriation, and is therefore out of the question. It can expect no aid from the Radio Manufacturers' Association who are not yet in a position to make a television receiver cheap enough to ensure mass sales. It would, therefore, seem that circumstances will compel television to remain in an experimental stage until the Treasury opens its pocket to the tune of a million or more a year or a new licensing system is initiated (the more likely of the two) and the manufacturers can put a set on the market for something under £20.

It is interesting to notice that the United States is finding it even more difficult to develop television within the limits of the sponsored programme system. Apart from the enormous initial expense of installing new equipment in the stations and laying out an entirely new network of wires, television is a more costly medium than radio in the programme stage itself.

For television, scripts must be memorised, positions and movements of the actors must be carefully rehearsed, and settings provided. All this costs a lot of money and the rich American patron is not prepared to foot the bill until he is assured of a bigger audience than is yet possible.

* * * *

The relays from Wimbledon were something quite new in quality of reproduction and in the placing of the shots. The trouble with so many film versions of the tennis tournaments has been that the camera has tried to keep pace with the ball, and in switching from one player to another has ended in a confusion of strokes and dashes with the ball invisible. The television version had one camera commanding the whole playing area of the court and another to interject close-ups of the scoreboard, one of the players or an occupant of the Royal Box. The general view of the court was so clear that you could see the tiny white ball flash from one side to the other quite distinctly. Unfortunately the figures on this scale were so small that one had to approach to within a foot or two of the screen to see them distinctly. But at this proximity the image was so distinct that you could follow every detail of the strokes. I have seen the Centre Court play in the newsreels and through television, and I can say that the latter was by far the closest approximation to the real scene, and incidentally more enjoyable.

Technically the Wimbledon relay was most important because it was the first recording of the mobile television unit. This unit consists of a scanning apparatus with an Emitron camera and a radio transmitter. The scene is scanned and broadcast on ultra-short waves over the twelve miles to Alexandra Palace. The experiment was a complete success and it now only remains to be seen whether the unit is able to range further afield.

* * * *

It is encouraging to notice that the B.B.C.'s Television Department is displaying the same vitality and critical powers that were once the characteristics of its parent organisation. It is obvious from the recent behaviour of the television camera that its directors are thinking about the scope and limitations of their medium. They have dropped panning altogether. Bad panning in some of the early programmes produced the funniest effects, especially in a game like table tennis, where the unfortunate viewer often felt like the man in the Shell advertisements. Sound commentary is still a difficulty. This was particularly noticeable in the Wimbledon relays. In radio commentaries the speech is always a few seconds behind the action of the game, but that does not worry the listener at all.

Such commentary is obviously useless when the listener watching the scene at the same time as the observer. The B.B.C. tried the old method with laughable results. At Wimbledon the observer often attempted to anticipate the actions of the players in what he said—again with amusing results. It seems that television will have to abandon any attempt to run a continuous commentary on every stroke of a game, and develop its sound more on the lines of critical comments on the actions that have gone before, much as an experienced observer in the stand might be remarking to his companion in the next seat on the progress of the game. The reactions of the crowd will also have more value as broadcast material when the cause of their comments is being seen.

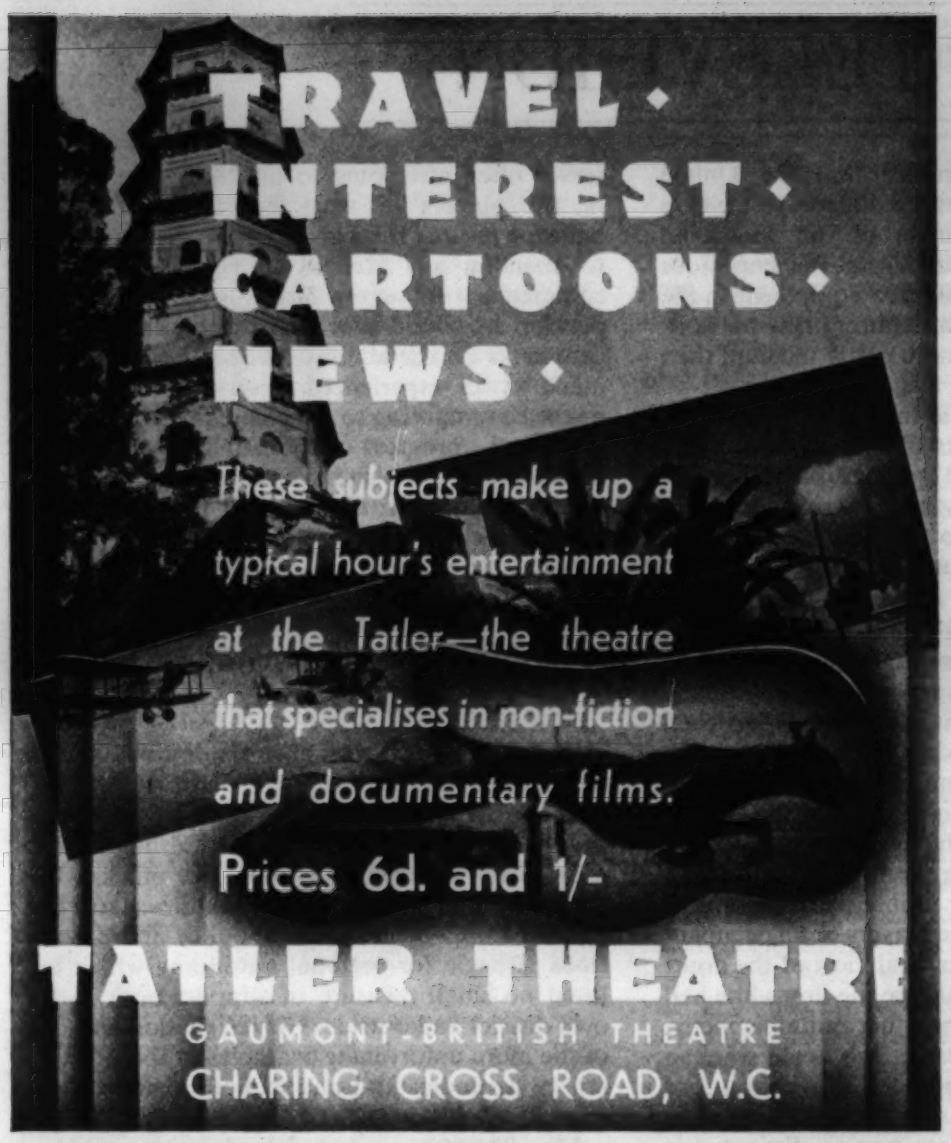
Radio is Changing Us—
by David Cleghorn Thomson
(Watts, 2/6)

Those who read Cleghorn Thomson's sketch of Sir John Reith in the last issue of *W.F.N.* will have caught something of the informed and penetrative qualities of his book. Behind him he has eight years' experience as a B.B.C. official. His directorship of the Scottish Regional was marked by a boldness of programme policy and a tenacious struggle for regional autonomy which enlisted no small measure of support both in his own district and outside. His resignation was one of the more unfortunate examples of the B.B.C.'s failure to understand and exploit creative capacity.

Mr. Thomson views broadcasting achievement from the standpoint of the professional; his chief interests lie in the internal shaping of policies and programmes. On the basic issues of the formation of taste, propaganda, monopoly, sponsorship, and relation to government he blesses the B.B.C. and finds it good. On the programme side he finds imagination, creative ability and, with the possible exception of the Talks Department, a progressive grasp of the opportunities of the medium. It is to the administration that he traces the root troubles which make the B.B.C. a "not yet happy ship" carrying "the heaviest crew of isolated intellectuals of any vessel in British waters." The charges against B.B.C. authority on this score are common knowledge. Initiative has been stifled, constructive criticism repressed, creative effort hedged about with regulations and red tape.

As a critic of the B.B.C., free from the restraints of immediate loyalty yet deeply concerned for broadcasting, Mr. Thomson is first-rate. But at the end of the book, though radio is seen to have changed the B.B.C.—and, incidentally, Mr. Thomson—it has not changed *us*. In 1933 Hilda Matheson published a short but admirable survey of broadcasting in which she foreshadowed the principal directions in which radio might affect society. She brought up a host of speculative questions concerning the probable action of radio on politics, citizenship, education, art and war. Mr. Thomson writes from the microphone, not from the loud-speaker. With the wisdom of caution he bases his interpretations on present trends and past achievements. But a measure of speculation from the listener's end would not have been out of place from one so well equipped.

S.L.



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COSTUME DRAMA—BUT NOT TOO MUCH!

by Sinclair Hill

SINCE 1933, according to a list in the March issue of WORLD FILM NEWS, some nineteen historical-biographical films have been produced in British studios.

The list does not include the numerous straight costume subjects (*i.e.* the non-historical, non-biographical works) that have also been made during that time.

If it did, the combined total of costume films would probably reach a pretty high figure. Which means that there has been a decided tendency on the part of costume and period film to dominate the British moving picture industry.

Has the British film industry benefited by this spate of costume and history? Or has the cycle been overdone?

Before answering these questions let us consider for a moment the outstanding British films that have been shown during the past few years—outstanding, that is, from the point of view of comparison with the ordinary product.

Almost at once we think of *Don Quixote*, *Henry VIII*, *Catherine the Great*, *Jew Suss*, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, *Nell Gwynn*, *Peg of Old Drury*, *Don Juan*.

We think of *Tudor Rose*, *Rembrandt*, *Fire Over England*, *The Wandering Jew*, *Mimi*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, *I Give My Heart*, etc.

I myself have been responsible for *The Cardinal* and *My Old Dutch* and there are other subjects far too numerous to mention.

But the above list is surely enough to show the extent of the costume trend.

Now most of these pictures, with the possible exception of *My Old Dutch*, are thorough out-and-out costume spectacles. Moreover they comprise the highlights of British production—the films on which, perhaps, we most pride ourselves.

To complete the data and add point to our arguments, we must not overlook the many American efforts in this line, from *Disraeli*, *The Barretts*, *Queen Christina*, *The House of Rothschild* and *Mutiny on the Bounty*, etc., right down to the more recent *White Angel*, *Anthony Adverse*, *Charge of the Light Brigade*, *Mary of Scotland*, *San Francisco* and *Camille*.

Now I think it will be found that whereas these American costume films are incidents in the general trend of Hollywood production, in British production the names mentioned, and the dozens not mentioned, tend to be somewhat dominant and overshadowing.

Why should this be?

A period film is necessarily expensive, with its lavish dresses and splendid settings (all of which have to be built in the studio), and however magnificent there is always the risk that they may appear a little superficial.

And yet, how does this spectacle and pomp compare with American-made pictures of modern life in simple settings—pictures well, but not ostentatiously dressed, such as *The Thin Man*, *Mr. Deeds*, *Three Smart Girls*, *Craig's Wife*, and all the others which come to us from Hollywood.

Do English producers dismiss the idea of making modern-life stories for home and overseas consumption because they cannot compete with the Americans on this ground? Do they consider costume parades better propositions?

I would like to make it clear that personally I am not in the least bit prejudiced against costume production, nor do I wish to take a narrow view of the situation. I believe that British producers are better qualified to deal with history and costume because of our deeper understanding and appreciation of tradition and the past, I believe the colour and glamour of the past, the amazing wealth of incident that can be culled from the pages of history, can make excellent entertainment.

Indeed, at this moment I myself am considering for production in the near future a costume subject which for many years I have been longing to film.

But—and this is the point of my argument—I maintain that costume must be used carefully and sparingly, and as an occasional ingredient in the entertainment cocktail.

As a whole aim and trend of production it may become an obsession and a bad master.

If America can make pictures like *The Informer*, *Exclusive Story* and *The Murder Man*, from simple, dramatic material, relying upon the story and idea behind the picture why cannot we in England do the same?

The answer is that we can do it if we try; and what is more we are beginning to do it.

To appreciate the truth of this you have only to consider recent productions like *Hail and Farewell*, *Sensation*, and *Jump for Glory*, and forthcoming pictures like *Four Dark Hours* and *A Shilling for Candles*.

I myself have just made a film about armaments called *Midnight Menace*, certainly a topical subject in view of the political situation to-day.

Yes, if we British producers would concentrate more on making dramas and comedies of life, with modern simplicity of atmosphere or topical significance, instead of casting too much of our lot with the past, I think we would not only benefit ourselves, but would undoubtedly be rendering cinema-goers at home, in the British Dominions and elsewhere, a real service.

"Don Quixote"

FILM GUIDE

Shorts

Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves (Puppets in Gaspar-colour).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Slatinay and George Pal

ANDOVER: Odeon	Aug. 9, 3 days
BARMOUTH: White Cinema	Aug. 19, 3 days
BRADFORD: Lyceum	Aug. 19, 3 days
DINGWALL: Picture House	Aug. 12, 3 days
DUNFERMLINE: Palace	Aug. 19, 3 days
ILFRACOMBE: New Cinema	Aug. 9, 6 days
KETTERING: Central	Aug. 2, 3 days
KIRKCALDY: Carlton	Aug. 30, 3 days
LEAMINGTON: Prince of Wales	Aug. 5, 3 days
SELBY: Central	Aug. 16, 2 days

And So to Work (Comedy of the early morning).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Richard Massingham

BIRMINGHAM: Northfield Picture House	Aug. 19, 3 days
LEEDS: Tatler	Aug. 30, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Smithdown Picture Playhouse	Aug. 19, 3 days

Beside the Seaside (Documentary of South Coast resorts).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Marion Grierson

NOTTINGHAM: News House	Aug. 5, 3 days
STOCKPORT: Cinema, Poynton	Aug. 2, 3 days

Birthplace of America (British origins of American pioneers).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION: A. Moncrieff Davidson

BRADFORD: Tennyson	Aug. 12, 3 days
CLITHEROE: Grand	Aug. 2, 3 days
HOLYWOOD: Maypole	Aug. 26, 3 days
HOYLAKE: Winter Gardens	Aug. 16, 3 days
HYDE: Theatre Royal	Aug. 26, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Warwick	Aug. 23, 3 days
MARPLE: Regent	Aug. 23, 2 days
OAKENGATES: Grosvenor	Aug. 19, 3 days
ORMSKIRK: Pavilion	Aug. 19, 3 days
PRESTWICH: Astoria	Aug. 5, 3 days
QUEENSFERRY: Plaza	Aug. 2, 3 days
RIPON: Palladium	Aug. 26, 3 days
ST. AUSTELL: Savoy	Aug. 9, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Park	Aug. 19, 3 days
WOODHOUSE: Picture Palace	Aug. 12, 3 days

Cover to Cover (Documentary of book production).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: Alexander Shaw

BARMOUTH: White Cinema	Aug. 19, 3 days
BOOTLE: Imperial	Aug. 16, 3 days
BRADFORD: Grange	Aug. 16, 3 days
CASTLETON: Princes	Aug. 13, 2 days
CHESTER-LE-STREET: Empire	Aug. 15, 1 day
CROYDON: Classic	Aug. 12, 3 days
DURHAM: Regal	Aug. 30, 3 days
GOLDTHORPE: Picture House	Aug. 23, 6 days
HOLMFIRTH: Valley	Aug. 19, 3 days
LOWESTOFT: Playhouse	Aug. 2, 24 days
NEWFIELD: Grand	Aug. 19, 3 days
NEWQUAY: Pavilion	Aug. 2, 3 days
RIPON: Opera House	Aug. 5, 3 days
ST. HELENS: Scala	Aug. 9, 6 days
TOOTING: Classic	Aug. 5, 3 days
WALTON: Capitol	Aug. 2, 3 days
WEST HARTLEPOOL: Regal	Aug. 23, 6 days

Enough to Eat? (Investigation into mal-nutrition).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Gas, Light and Coke Co.
DIRECTION: Edgar Anstey

ABERDEEN: Topical News	Aug. 16, 6 days
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur	Aug. 9, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Leicester Square	Aug. 9, 3 days
Monseigneur, Piccadilly	Aug. 9, 3 days
Sphere, Tottenham Court Road	Aug. 12, 3 days
Strand, Agar Street	Aug. 12, 3 days
NOTTINGHAM: News House	Aug. 19, 3 days
SOUTHEND: Kursaal	Aug. 19, 3 days

Forbidden Frontier (Political situation between Poland and Lithuania).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: World Window Productions
SUPERVISION: Sir Philip Gibbs

EGREMONT: Gaumont Palace	Aug. 9, 6 days
GLOSSOP: Empire	Aug. 23, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Corona	Aug. 19, 3 days
Gaumont, Princes Park	Aug. 19, 3 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Princes	Aug. 23, 6 days
NORTHWICH: Plaza	Aug. 23, 6 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews	Aug. 22, 4 days
SOUTHPORT: Palladium	Aug. 30, 6 days
WEYMOUTH: Belle Vue	Aug. 19, 3 days

Gentlemen in Top Hats and Gentlemen in Crowns (Historical survey of European events for the past 40 years).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: A.B. Svensk Filmindustri
ENGLISH VERSION: Donald Taylor

IPSWICH: Picture House	Aug. 2, 6 days

Happy Hampstead (All about Hampstead).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: R. B. Pearce

ASTON: Astoria	Aug. 12, 3 days
BRIGHTON: Duke of York's	Aug. 2, 3 days
FARNDON: Palace	Aug. 19, 3 days
HARROW: Carlton	Aug. 9, 3 days
ILFORD: Coliseum	Aug. 16, 6 days
LEEDS: Tatler	Aug. 16, 6 days
Picture House, Headingley	Aug. 26, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Carlton	Aug. 2, 3 days
NORWOOD: Astoria	Aug. 1, 4 days
NORTHFLEET: Strathena	Aug. 9, 3 days
TOOTING: Vogue	Aug. 5, 3 days

Heads and Tails (Film of greyhound racing).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning

ELTHAM: Palace	Aug. 16, 6 days
GRAVESEND: Super	Aug. 22, 7 days

Hollywood To-day (Behind the scenes in Film City).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: Rupert Grayson

BLOXWICH: Odeon	Aug. 19, 3 days
CHESTERFIELD: Picture House	Aug. 16, 6 days
CHICHESTER: Plaza	Aug. 19, 3 days
CROYDON: Classic	Aug. 8, 4 days
DUNDEE: Empire	Aug. 12, 3 days
Vogue	Aug. 12, 3 days
GRAVESEND: Regal	Aug. 29, 7 days
HULL: Savoy	Aug. 5, 3 days
KINGS LYNN: Majestic	Aug. 19, 3 days
LANCING: Regal	Aug. 19, 3 days
LEEDS: Tatler	Aug. 16, 6 days
MAIDSTONE: Palace	Aug. 1, 7 days
MANCHESTER: Tatler	Aug. 30, 6 days
SALISBURY: Picture House	Aug. 5, 3 days
SHEFFIELD: Hillsborough Park	Aug. 23, 3 days
Lansdowne	Aug. 12, 3 days
Sunbeam	Aug. 12, 3 days
Weston	Aug. 19, 3 days
STAFFORD: Odeon	Aug. 23, 6 days
STOURBRIDGE: Central	Aug. 26, 3 days
YORK: Odeon	Aug. 2, 6 days

How to be a Detective (In the Benchley manner).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION and DIRECTION: Robert Benchley

MANCHESTER: Tatler	Aug. 30, 6 days

How to Train a Dog (Typical Benchley).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION and DIRECTION: Robert Benchley

MANCHESTER: Tatler	Aug. 9, 6 days

Islands of the Bounty (Islands associated with the famous mutiny).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.

BARTON-ON-HUMBER: Oxford	Aug. 9, 3 days
CHILTON: Regal	Aug. 5, 3 days
CONGLETON: Pemier	Aug. 4, 4 days
GAINSBOROUGH: Grand	Aug. 16, 3 days
HILLSBOROUGH: Kinema	Aug. 5, 3 days
LEMINGTON: Prince of Wales	Aug. 5, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Royal	Aug. 19, 3 days
MEXBOROUGH: Empire	Aug. 2, 6 days
PLAISTOW: Greengates	Aug. 9, 3 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews	Aug. 1, 4 days

Joie de Vivre (Cartoon).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
PRODUCTION: Gross and Hoppin

CHELMSFORD: Ritz	Aug. 30, 6 days
LONDON: News Theatre, Victoria	Aug. 23, 3 days
News Theatre, Waterloo	Aug. 26, 3 days
NORWICH: Carlton	Aug. 2, 5 days

Key to Scotland (Documentary of Edinburgh).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Marion Grierson

LIVERPOOL: Smithdown Picture Playhouse	Aug. 23, 3 days
LONDON: King's Palace, Wimbledon	Aug. 23, 6 days
Sphere, Tottenham Court Road	Aug. 12, 3 days
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE: Adelaide, Benwell	Aug. 23, 3 days

Milestones (The varying types to be seen in England).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION: A. Moncrieff Davidson

DARLASTON: Picturedrome	Aug. 26, 3 days
DARNALL: Lyric	Aug. 26, 3 days
GOLBORNE: Royal Pavilion	Aug. 19, 3 days
GREAT HOXTON: Grange	Aug. 5, 3 days
HALIFAX: Alhambra	Aug. 23, 3 days
HORWICH: Picture House	Aug. 30, 3 days
NEWCASTLE (Co. Down, Ireland): Picture Palace	Aug. 11, 2 days
ORMSKIRK: Pavilion	Aug. 26, 3 days
RIPON: Palladium	Aug. 19, 3 days
SALFORD: Rex	Aug. 9, 3 days
SKIPTON: Plaza	Aug. 2, 3 days
STRETFORD: Corona	Aug. 23, 3 days

Night Mail (Documentary of the northward trip of the postal special).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
PRODUCTION: Basil Wright and Harry Watt

ALCESTER: Regent	Aug. 23, 3 days
CARNFORTH: Kinema	Aug. 27, 2 days
DUNFERMLINE: Palace	Aug. 19, 3 days
INGLETON: Cinema	Aug. 2, 2 days
LEEDS: Haddon Hall	Aug. 23, 3 days
MIDDLETON: Palace	Aug. 2, 6 days
PLAISTOW: Greengates	Aug. 9, 3 days
STAVELEY: Empire	Aug. 5, 3 days
TENBY: Pavilion	Aug. 5, 3 days
TOOTING: Classic	Aug. 22, 4 days

Nomad in the North (Scenic film of Norway).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION and DIRECTION: C. E. Hodges

BIRKENHEAD: Super	Aug. 23, 6 days
EGREMONT: Gaumont Palace	Aug. 23, 6 days
CINDERFORD: Palace	Aug. 30, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Casino	Aug. 5, 3 days
Empress	Aug. 23, 6 days
Gaumont Palace	Aug. 26, 3 days
Plaza	Aug. 2, 3 days
Tatler	Aug. 23, 3 days
NEW BRIGHTON: Trocadero	Aug. 26, 3 days
NORTH SHIELDS: Princes	Aug. 30, 6 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews	Aug. 26, 3 days
SOUTHPORT: Palladium	Aug. 12, 7 days
WESTON SUPER MARE: Regent	Aug. 30, 6 days

Out to Play (London's children in street and park).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: Harold Lowenstein

HARROW: Carlton	Aug. 30, 3 days
LEYTON: Kings	Aug. 23, 6 days
LONDON: Cameo, Charing Cross Road	Aug. 30, 3 days
Tatler, Charing Cross Road	Aug. 23, 7 days

Overland Express (German travelogue).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: C. E. Hodges Productions

ABERDEEN: Topical News	Aug. 2, 6 days
CIRENCESTER: Picture House	Aug. 16, 3 days
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur	Aug. 16, 3 days
GLASGOW: Westway, Cardonald	Aug. 5, 3 days
LONDON: Sphere, Tottenham Court Road	Aug. 23 ,3 days
Strand, Agar Street	Aug. 23, 3 days
NOTTINGHAM: News House	Aug. 26, 3 days
SOUTHEND: Kursaal	Aug. 9, 3 days
WORTHING: Rivoli	Aug. 2, 6 days

Shorts (contd.)

Plane Sailing (The ins and outs of gliding).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Bosworth Goldman

BATH: News Theatre	Aug. 30, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	Aug. 19, 3 days
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur	Aug. 26, 3 days
GAINSBOROUGH: Grand	Aug. 2, 3 days
GRANTHAM: Picture House	Aug. 5, 3 days
GUERNSEY: Lyric	Aug. 26, 3 days
KINGS LYNN: Majestic	Aug. 2, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Gaumont Palace	Aug. 12, 3 days
Tatler	Aug. 26, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Charing Cross	Aug. 23, 3 days
Monseigneur, Leicester Square	Aug. 12, 3 days
Sphere, Tottenham Court Road	Aug. 19, 3 days
Strand, Agar Street	Aug. 9, 3 days
LUTON: Empire	Aug. 12, 3 days
MANCHESTER: Tatler	Aug. 30, 6 days
NORTHAMPTON: Exchange	Aug. 2, 6 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews	Aug. 26, 3 days
SOUTHPORT: Palladium	Aug. 9, 6 days
WAKEFIELD: Carlton	Aug. 12, 3 days
WEYMOUTH: Regent	Aug. 9, 6 days

Rooftops of London (Documentary).
DISTRIBUTION: M.G.M.
PRODUCTION: Strand Films
DIRECTION: Paul Rotha

MANCHESTER: Tatler	Aug. 16, 6 days

Scratch Meal (Marcel Boulestin demonstrates cooking).
DISTRIBUTION: A.B.F.D.
DIRECTION: Arthur Elton

MANCHESTER: Tatler	Aug. 2, 6 days

Secret Hiding Places (Priest holes to be found in English country houses).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
DIRECTION: Granville Squiers

EDINBURGH: Monseigneur	Aug. 2, 3 days
LANCING: Regal	Aug. 5, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Piccadilly	Aug. 19, 3 days
Monseigneur, Strand	Aug. 16, 3 days
WINDSOR: Regal	Aug. 2, 3 days

Snow Water (Water power in the Swiss mountains).
DISTRIBUTION: Kinograph
PRODUCTION: H. Dreyer

BATH: News Theatre	Aug. 16, 3 days
BRIDGWATER: Palace	Aug. 12, 3 days
CIRENCESTER: Picture House	Aug. 19, 3 days
CORBY: Odeon	Aug. 5, 3 days
DORCHESTER: Palace	Aug. 9, 3 days
EDINBURGH: Monseigneur	Aug. 30, 3 days
GUERNSEY: Lyric	Aug. 2, 6 days
HARROGATE: Odeon	Aug. 30, 6 days
HEREFORD: Odeon	Aug. 22, 4 days
LIVERPOOL: Bedford	Aug. 5, 3 days
Magnet	Aug. 26, 3 days
Tatler	Aug. 19, 3 days
LONDON: Monseigneur, Leicester Square	Aug. 26, 3 days
Monseigneur, Charing Cross	Aug. 19, 3 days
Sphere, Tottenham Court Road	Aug. 26, 3 days
Strand, Agar Street	Aug. 12, 3 days
NEW BRIGHTON: Trocadero	Aug. 2, 3 days
NORTHAMPTON: Exchange	Aug. 9, 6 days
SOUTHAMPTON: Cinenews	Aug. 5, 3 days
STOURBRIDGE: Central	Aug. 2, 3 days
YORK: Odeon	Aug. 30, 6 days

Song of Ceylon (Documentary of Ceylon).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
PRODUCTION: John Grierson for G.P.O. Film Unit
DIRECTION: Basil Wright

FARNDON: Palace	Aug. 12, 3 days
WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA: Mascot	Aug. 2, 6 days

Spring Comes to Town (About Hyde Park).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: M. L. Nathan

BATH: News Theatre	Aug. 9, 3 days
HARROW: Carlton	Aug. 16, 3 days
LEYTON: Kings	Aug. 16, 6 days
LONDON: Tatler	Aug. 9, 7 days

Strange Adventure (About Africa).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning

AYLESBURY: Market	Aug. 30, 3 days
BARNSLEY: Ritz	Aug. 2, 6 days
BECKENHAM: Regal	Aug. 9, 6 days
BOLTON: Regal	Aug. 9, 3 days
BRIDGWATER: Palace	Aug. 19, 3 days
DARLINGTON: Alhambra	Aug. 2, 3 days
ERITH: Picture House	Aug. 9, 3 days
GUILDFORD: Plaza	Aug. 19, 3 days
HIGH WYCOMBE: Majestic	Aug. 23, 3 days
ILFORD: Coliseum	Aug. 30, 3 days
LEYTON: Kings	Aug. 30, 6 days
LIVERPOOL: Bedford	Aug. 19, 3 days
Casino	Aug. 19, 3 days
Gaumont	Aug. 5, 3 days
Plaza	Aug. 19, 3 days
LONDON: Cinema, Woolwich	Aug. 16, 6 days
Hippodrome, Greenwich	Aug. 16, 6 days
Regal, Wimbledon	Aug. 9, 6 days
Walpole, Ealing	Aug. 30, 6 days
NEW BRIGHTON: Trocadero	Aug. 16, 3 days
NORWICH: Carlton	Aug. 30, 6 days
SOUTHERN: Ritz	Aug. 1, 7 days
TUNBRIDGE WELLS: Ritz	Aug. 30, 6 days
UXBRIDGE: Savoy	Aug. 30, 6 days
WEYBRIDGE: County	Aug. 23, 3 days
WEYMOUTH: Belle Vue	Aug. 2, 3 days
WINCHESTER: Royal	Aug. 19, 3 days

They Shall Not Pass (Documentary of the Civil War in Spain; English commentary).
DISTRIBUTION: International Sound Films
PRODUCTION: Ministry of Public Instruction in Madrid

ABERDEEN: News Theatre	Aug. 2, 6 days
PAISLEY: West End	Aug. 16, 6 days
Alexandra	Aug. 19, 3 days
GLASGOW: Orient	Aug. 23, 6 days

Under the Water (Unusual submarine photography).
DISTRIBUTION: Denning
DIRECTION: Marcel de Hubsch

CLEVELEYS: Pavilion	Aug. 8, 4 days
FARNDON: Palace	Aug. 19, 3 days
LIVERPOOL: Carlton	Aug. 26, 3 days
MAIDSTONE: Palace	Aug. 15, 7 days
SNODLAND: Queens	Aug. 16, 3 days
WREXHAM: Majestic	Aug. 5, 3 days
YORK: Clifton	Aug. 2, 7 days

Foreign Films

Yiddle with His Fiddle (Polish comedy, with English sub-titles).
DIRECTION: Joseph Green
STARRING: Molly Picon

LONDON: Academy	Aug. 1, indefinitely

Virtuous Isidore (French).
DISTRIBUTION: International Film Distributors
DIRECTION: Bernard Deschamps
STARRING: Françoise Rosay, Fernandal

LONDON: Forum	Aug. 8, 7 days

Mad Girl (French).
DIRECTION: Leo Joannon
STARRING: Daniel Darrieux

LONDON: Curzon	Following *The Court Waltzes*

L'Equipage (French).
PRODUCTION: Pathé
DIRECTION: Anatole Litvak
STARRING: Jean Murat, Annabella

LONDON: Studio One	Following *Der Ammenkoenig*

The Court Waltzes (German—French version).
PRODUCTION: Gunther Stapenhorst for Ufa
DIRECTION: Ludwig Berger
STARRING: Fernand Gravey, Jeanine Crispine

LONDON: Curzon	Aug. 1, indefinitely

Der Ammenkoenig (German).
DIRECTION: Hans Steinhoff
PRODUCTION: Tobis

LONDON: Studio One	Aug. 1, indefinitely

Feature Films for August Release

This is not a complete list of current releases, but a *W.F.N.* selection. While all poor and mediocre films are omitted from the list, inclusion does not necessarily infer outstanding merit. For the guidance of our readers, films starred in *Review of Reviews* are again starred.

Maid of Salem (Paramount) *
DIRECTOR: Frank Lloyd
STARRING: Claudette Colbert, Fred MacMurray, Bonita Granville, E. E. Clive

Man in Possession (M.G.M.) *
DIRECTOR: W. S. Van Dyke
STARRING: Jean Harlow, Robert Taylor

The Dominant Sex (Wardour)
DIRECTOR: Herbert Brenon
STARRING: Phillips Holmes, Diana Churchill

Michael Strogoff (Radio)
DIRECTOR: George Nicholls, jun.
STARRING: Anton Walbrook, Elizabeth Allan, Margot Grahame, Akim Tamiroff, Fay Bainter

Moonlight Sonata (United Artists—Pall Mall)
DIRECTOR: Lothar Mendes
STARRING: Paderewski, Marie Tempest, Charles Farrell, Barbara Greene

Nancy Steele is Missing (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: George Marshall
STARRING: Victor McLaglen, Peter Lorre, Walter Connolly, June Lang

One in a Million (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: Sidney Lanfield
STARRING: Sonja Henie, Don Ameche, Adolphe Menjou

Song of the Road (Sound City)
DIRECTOR: John Baxter
STARRING: Bransby Williams, Davy Burnaby, Muriel George

Stolen Holiday (Warner Bros.)
DIRECTOR: Michael Curtiz
STARRING: Kay Francis, Claude Rains, Ian Hunter, Alison Skipworth

Stowaway (20th Century-Fox)
DIRECTOR: William A. Seiter
STARRING: Shirley Temple, Robert Young, Alice Faye

A selection of Films recently made, or still in production, on

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BRITISH PRODUCTIONS

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PICTURES

	Photography by
Old Boy	Claude Friese-Greene
Over She Goes	Otto Kanturek

ASSOCIATED TALKING PICTURES

Keep Fit	John W. Boyle

BRITISH INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

Let's Make a Night of It	Claude Friese-Greene and Otto Kanturek

BRITISH LION

Leave It To Me	George Stretton

DORIAN PRODUCTIONS

Man Without a Home	Jan Stallich and Phil Tannura

FITZPATRICK PRODUCTIONS

The Bells of St. Mary	Hone Glendinning
The Last Rose of Summer	Hone Glendinning

FOX-BRITISH

Bone of Contention	Ronald Neame
Londonderry Air	Ronald Neame
Wise Guys	Stanley Grant

GAINSBOROUGH PICTURES

	Photography by
Oh, Mr. Porter	Arthur Crabtree
Said O'Reilley to McNab	Arthur Crabtree

GAUMONT-BRITISH

A Shilling for Candles	Bernard Knowles
Dr. Syn	Jack Cox
Gangway	Glen McWilliams
Non-Stop New York	Mutz Greenbaum

G.S. PRODUCTIONS

Why Pick On Me?	Geoffrey Faithfull
Father Steps Out	Geoffrey Faithfull

IMPERATOR FILMS

Victoria the Great (with Technicolor Sequence, also on Kodak stock)	F. A. Young

JACK BUCHANAN PRODUCTIONS

Smash and Grab	Roy Clark and Henry Harris

MANCUNIAN FILMS

	Photography by
Penny Pool	Germaine Berger

PREMIERE-STAFFORD

The Return of a Stranger	James Wilson

PHOENIX FILMS

Brief Ecstasy	Henry Harris and Ronald Neame

TRIANGLE FILMS

Under A Cloud	Hone Glendinning

VICTOR SAVILLE PRODUCTIONS

South Riding	H. Stradling

VIKING FILMS

Shooting Stars	Desmond Dickinson

WARNER BROS.

Have You Come For Me?	Basil Emmott
From The Dark Stairway	Robert Lapresle
Change For a Sovereign	Robert Lapresle

WAINWRIGHT PRODUCTIONS

School For Husbands	Phil Tannura

AMERICAN PRODUCTIONS

COLUMBIA

	Photography by
Professional Juror	Freulich
Once A Hero	Walker and Freulich
With Kind Regards	Siegler

METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER

Day At The Races	Ruttenburg and Seitz
Marie Waleska	Freund
The Emperor's Candlesticks	Rosson
Broadway Melody of 1937/8	Daniels
Firefly	Marsh and De Vinna
Saratoga	June
You'll Be Married by Noon	Smith
General Hospital	Seitz

PARAMOUNT

Exclusive	Mellor
Angel	Lang
Tight Wad	Sharp and Perry
Artists and Models	Milner
Easy Living	Tetzlaff
Souls At Sea	Gerstad
Forlorn River	Holleberger and Miller

RKO

	Photography by
Mexican Quarter	Musuraca
Super Sleuth	August
New Faces of 1937	Hunt and Marley
You Can't Beat Love	Metty
Vivacious Lady	De Grasse
Easy Going	Mackenzie
Take the Heir	Musuraca

UNIVERSAL

West Coast Limited	Bredell
Love in a Bungalow	Krasner
Reported Missing	Robinson
Armoured Car	Cortez
The Road Back	Robinson and Mescall
One Hundred Men and a Girl	Valentine

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

You Can't Have Everything	Andriot
Escape From Love	Jackson
Sing and Be Happy	Clark
Armoured Taxi	D. Clark
Thin Ice	Cronjager
Lancer Spy	McGill

	Photography by
Born Reckless	D. Clark
Jones Family	Snyder
Wild and Woolly	Jackson

WARNER BROS.

Mr. Dodd Takes The Air	Edeson
Varsity Show	Polito
First Lady	Hickox
Gentlemen After Midnight	Van Trees
Angle Shooter	Todd
That Certain Woman	Haller
Emile Zola	Gaudio
Ever Since Eve	Barnes
The Perfect Specimen	Rosher

REPUBLIC

Rhythm On The Clouds	E. Miller
It Might Happen To You	Marta

SELZNICK (Independent)

Prisoner of Zenda	Howe and Glennan

GOLDWYN

Dead End	Toland

INDEPENDENT

I Cover The War	Neuman
The Californian	Neuman

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WORLD FILM NEWS

AMATEUR AND TECHNICAL SECTION

The film—its theory and practice

by

Paul Burnford, A.R.P.S.

The Black and White Film

THE film is too often considered as a medium for the exact reproduction of reality and it is thus that so many film makers come unhinged. Creation, not imitation should be sought. The accomplishment of the latter is, in any case, well-nigh impossible, owing to unavoidable technical deficiences.

These are: (*a*) The picture having to be rendered in black and white (colour will be dealt with later). (*b*) The two dimensional limitations. (*c*) The necessity of viewing the screen in a darkened room or theatre.

But by these very limitations the film derives its powers of expression, and thus becomes a powerful force for entertainment, education and propaganda. Analysing these deficiences individually, it will be seen that each can be utilised to progress the whole artistically.

(*a*) In nature, colour and tone are always present, but in cinema, tone only is available as a series of shades varying from black to white. Retention or even creation of atmosphere can thereby be gained and thus a film takes on its various moods. For example, I recently saw a winter landscape which, when reproduced on a screen, achieved a far more typical atmosphere than the original. This was desirous as the impression of winter was thus accentuated.

Closely allied to tone is the question of luminosity, which can be increased or decreased as desired. This is partly due to the transmission of light through the film. By combining this with sufficient under or over-exposure to increase or decrease the contrast respectively, and using filters, further atmospheric results can be derived accordingly.

In the film, with its quick succession of images, shots, scenes and sequences, speed of comprehension is an essential factor, and thus monochrome, with quicker powers of absorption than colour achieves this object.

(*b*) The fact of the film having only two dimensions is probably its greatest asset, for thereby the director has greater control over his selection of subject or part thereof. Not only selection by area covered with the camera, but also selection by focus. Combine this with the film's all-powerful force of editing, and the director has control over space and time. In other words, the succession of shots need not be in the order of actual time, but can be arranged in the order desired by the director to make up his sequence.

And similarly with space. Two or more entirely separate shots can be interconnected even if they actually existed in different places, and have no relation whatsoever.

An example occurred in a film in which steeplejacks were engaged in cleaning the Statue of Justice on the summit of the Old Bailey. The order of shots were: (i) A slow vertical pan from a crowded street up to the steeplejacks. (ii) Looking down from a great height on to the streets and buildings below. (iii) M.S. of steeplejacks. (iv) Looking down on to other streets and buildings. (v) C.U. of steeplejacks.

The effect on the audience was to accentuate the precariousness and danger of the location by intercutting the aforementioned looking down shots. Now not only were the latter filmed in entirely different localities to where the steeplejacks were working (one was shot from the dome of St. Paul's, and the other from the roof of Shell Mex), but on entirely different days. And still more important, the first two groups of steeplejacks are different men and were shot at entirely different times to the last group.

(*c*) The ideal and essential form in which to view a film is in a darkened room or theatre. If a small rectangular screen occupying a comparatively small space in a vast hall or theatre, has the power to hold the attention of an audience of hundreds, surely some reason must be attributed to its power of commanding concentration. The apparent reason is that the absence of extraneous light other than that on the screen itself, enables the audience to concentrate in full force thereon, and the visual sense, being the most active under the conditions mentioned is allowed full, uninterrupted play. (The presence of sound introduces other problems.)

By comparing the responsiveness of audiences to a given film shown in different theatres under varying intensities of auditorium lighting, the results were found to be in almost direct proportion to the darkness of the theatre.

A film should not necessarily be blamed for its faults until these considerations have been first fully investigated.

The Colour Film

The introduction of colour alters the aforementioned values of the black and white film. Colour is permissible provided it is used creatively to enhance the artistic values, but the moment it is used simply to displace black and white it becomes valueless, the film immediately ceasing to be creative.

An understanding of accepted colour reactions will greatly simplify the work. For instance, red tends to excite violence or passion, orange and yellow stimulate, blue depresses, and green is soothing and restful. By using colours either harmoniously or discordantly, one with the other, further control over the emotions can be excited.

The only reasonable use of colour up to the present has been by Disney and the cartoonists, Len Lye with his abstracts, certain puppet films, and the ballroom sequence in *Becky Sharp*. With the exception of the last-mentioned, all have been fantasy in some form or another.

Many other subjects, however, could easily be undertaken by the amateur. A documentary of agricultural work at different seasons of the year might well be composed of colours having a progressive influence. Emphasis could be laid on the gleaming red of the plough churning up the rich brown earth, the sweat of energy on the healthy sun tanned faces of the workers, the colours of the flowers and trees and foliage, and the golden autumnal hues seen under a deep blue sky.

Another interesting project is the filming of a sunset in stop motion. The effect is one of extraordinary beauty as the colours blend and mix one into another. The medium of cinema alone can achieve such a spectacle.

The prophecies of colour completely ousting black and white is surely a most undesirable state of affairs, for surely there is room for each to progress along parallel paths. Only by such progression can the cinema of the future hope to thrive.

FILM SOCIETIES AND CLUBS

FILM PHOTO AND LEAGUE: Hon. Secretary, H. Cuthbertson, Esq., 3 Somerset Terrace, London, W.C.1. (Tel. EUSton 4829).

Mr. Sydney W. Cole lectured to the League on Monday, July 5th, giving an illuminating description of the technical development of films during the century. At the same meeting *Revolt of the Fishermen* (a study of the fishing strike) was screened and criticised.

The first issue of "Left Film Front," the bulletin of the League, has been published, price 1*d*. It contains, among other interesting material, details of the Left Book Club Summer School, to be held from July 31st to August 14th, when the League will be projecting and discussing films, and exhibiting projectors, cameras, equipment and literature. A film is to be made at the School, and any suggestions as to themes suitable for the background of Digswell Park House (where the school is being held) are welcome. It may be a story film, one of working-class history, or of a propaganda nature, in one reel.

MANCHESTER AND SALFORD FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, R. Cordwell, Esq., 13 Milwain Drive, Heaton Chapel, Stockport.

The autumn session of British and continental films of artistic, cultural and scientific value, will be held at the Rivoli Cinema, Rusholme, Manchester, on Sundays, September 26th, October 24th, November 21st and December 19th at 7.30 p.m. Features will be selected from the following (amongst others): *Student of Prague*, *Kuple Wampe*, *Fredlös*, *Die Ewige Maske* and *The Robber Symphony*. Later it is hoped to obtain *The New Gulliver*, *We From Kronstadt*, *La Kermesse Héroïque* and *La Bandera*. Shorts will include outstanding examples of experimental and technical achievements, and discussions on the films shown will be arranged occasionally.

The Society aims at a membership of 500 this year—there is seating accommodation for 1,000. Additional activities will be dependent on the support forthcoming. Subscription: 10*s*. per annum.

TYNESIDE FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, M. C. Pottinger, Esq., c/o Literary and Philosophical Society, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1.

The Society has followed up the highly successful pioneer exhibition of Art Direction which it organised a year ago, by another pioneer exhibition—of the work of leading costume designers.

The artists represented were M. René Hubert and Professor Ernst Stern. M. Hubert lent sketches for *Fire Over England*, *Dark Journey*, *Under the Red Robe*, *Men Are Not Gods* and the now abandoned *Cyrano de Bergerac*. In addition there were a number of sketches for the costumes in the following stage productions: *Swing Along*, *Balalaika*, *Rise and Shine*, *Careless Rapture* and *Garden Party*. Professor Stern was represented by sketches for *Pagliacci*, *Land Without Music*, *Marriage of Corbal* and *Two Orphans*. Altogether there were almost 250 designs on view, many of which the Society was able to match with still photographs of the completed costumes as they appeared on the screen.

The sketches of the two artists afforded an interesting contrast in method. Those of Stern were in water-colour on ordinary drawing paper; those of Hubert were on tracing paper, and were remarkable not only for the great delicacy of their execution, but for the way in which they managed to suggest the shimmery and diaphanous quality of dresses and a real sense of texture and material. Many of the sketches bore pencilled instructions concerning the exact materials that were to be used, and a few had specimens of the material attached. M. Hubert's method, as he explained to the Chairman of the Society, is to design from the coloured material and not from the pigment.

A number of reproductions of Messel's designs for the costumes in *Romeo and Juliet* were also on display.

The exhibition, which lasted a week and was open to the public, was held in the Hatton Art Gallery, kindly lent by Professor Alan Mainds, of the Department of Fine Art, Armstrong College.

ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, Howard Cricks, Esq., 35 Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

An Exhibition of Kinematography, comprising Films, Stills and Apparatus will be held from November 13th to November 27th, 1937. The keynote of the Exhibition will be "The Film as a Social Force," and during its course, lectures and demonstrations of interest to both professionals and amateurs will be given. A competition, embracing all types of films, has been arranged, and a selection from the films receiving awards will be shown during the Exhibition. For the first time, the competition will include sections for 35 mm. films, not exceeding 2,000 feet in length, in monochrome or colour.

Under the Articles of Association of the Society Associateships are awarded to those members who satisfy the Council of their ability in one or other of the branches of photography, or the arts and sciences relating thereto; Fellowships are granted to those Associates who possess distinguished ability and originality.

Two points which may be emphasised are the very high standard which is required of applicants for the Fellowship, the basis of the qualifications being creative work; and that nothing in these recommendations prevents the Fellowship or Associateship being awarded on grounds of individual work or abilities, the extended qualifications being designed to cover cases where the applicants sole or principal qualifications are his share in the corporate production of motion pictures.

WOLVERHAMPTON FILM SOCIETY: Membership Secretary, Miss D. Boston, 60 Great Brickkiln Street. Programme Secretary, E. L. Packer, Esq., 58 Himley Crescent, Wolverhampton.

Mr. T. A. Warren, Director of Education for Wolverhampton, has been appointed President of the Society for the season 1937-38, and many prominent people have become patrons. Activities are suspended until October. Meetings to illustrate the use of film as propaganda are among the plans made for the coming season.

ACE MOVIES: Hon. Secretary, Channon Wood, Esq., 15 Openview, S.W.18. Studio, 90 High Street Mews, Wimbledon, S.W.19.

Ace Movies is forming a documentary group to specialise in the production of films of social and educational importance, and it is possible that by the time this appears in print the first production will be under way. This is a new departure for this club which has in the past specialised, with some degree of success, in photoplay production. This latter type of production is not being discarded, the production of documentary films being supplementary to the club's normal programme.

Vacancies occur for a few active members, and visitors are always welcome at the studio on Thursdays and Sundays, between 8.30 and 11 p.m.

BLACKHEATH FILM CLUB: Hon. Secretary, John Gibson, Esq., 6 St. German's Place, London, S.E.3.

Production No. 8 is now in the hands of the editors, and the Club is in the throes of holidays. Plans are afoot for Production No. 9, which should be at the shooting stage after the Gala Week in October. Meanwhile the Documentary Unit is working on a film of Kent for the Amateur Services Club's contest, using several of the Acting Members in a series of "family incidents" as the necessary continuity links. The Unit, which works independently from the Club as far as the financial side is concerned, has joined the B.A.S.C. *en masse*, and is very keen to participate in the movement.

It is hoped that other Societies will visit the Blackheath Film Club during the Gala Week—details of which will be issued later.

ELTHAM CINE SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, Miss V. D. White, 36 Craigton Road, Eltham, S.E.9.

The Society is now at work on the production of *The Emperor's New Clothes*, a colour film in sound. The use of colour in interiors has necessitated considerable increase in the amount of light needed, and this has been made possible by the construction of additional lighting units. A new microphone has resulted in far better quality of recording than hitherto, and the only trouble at the moment is a bad echo in the studio. It is hoped to overcome this by judicious use of drapings, etc.

Future productions include a colour film to be made on the Cornish coast, and a new full-length story film which goes into production in the late autumn.

WEST ESSEX FILM SOCIETY: Hon. Secretary, F. J. Philpott, Esq., 7 Wellington Road, East Ham, E.6.

On June 26th members of the Society attended the meeting of the Kine Federation of the Royal Photographic Society at 35 Russell Square.

Shooting has commenced on the Society's new film, *Hiking*. The scenario was written by Mr. S. Martin, and Mr. L. Shepard is directing. It is hoped that shooting will continue during the next few weeks.

Good progress is being made on the several films which members have in hand.

(Club News—continued)

METEOR FILM PRODUCING SOCIETY: Membership Secretary, Miss Peggy L. Clark, 15 North Gardner Street, Glasgow, W.1. Programme Secretary, Ian S. Ross, Esq., 80 Buchanan Street, Glasgow, C.1.

The Society is producing a film at the request of the Scottish Church Film Guild. The scenario has been specially written for the Guild by the Scots author, Angus MacVicar.

The Society has been corresponding over a considerable period with H.M. Customs and Excise, who have been demanding payment of entertainment duty on shows held in the studio since the inception of the Society. As these shows were purely for the instruction of members, and generally consisted of shots from films which members had in production, or of films made by the Society, the Council of the Meteor Society considers that the question is of importance to the whole amateur cine movement.

After much discussion, H.M. Customs and Excise completely abandoned their claims—a matter which should be of interest to everyone engaged in amateur production.

WEST MIDDLESEX AMATEUR CINE CLUB: Hon. Secretary, Eric H. Whittleton, Esq., 39 Derwentwater Road, Acton, W.3.

The Club is now preparing its 1937-38 programme. A 9.5 mm. film will be produced when the present production, *It Can't Happen Here*, is completed. The latter film has resulted in some excellent shots, which will repay the energy spent in erecting various indoor sets, including a night club, snack bar and book shop.

Holiday time finds members departing to all parts of Great Britain and Europe. They will, needless to say, spend some considerable time shooting whilst on tour, and judging by the discussions that have taken place, some original ideas on "holiday scripts" will be forthcoming.

A visit to a film studio is being arranged, when special attention will be paid to the sound recording outfits used.

The last Club film *Fame* (16 mm.), has been shown to many amateur societies, and generally commended.

WIMBLEDON CINE CLUB: Hon. Secretary, C. W. Watkins, Esq., 79 Mostyn Road, Merton Park, S.W.19.

A most successful two days showing of the film of local Coronation festivities was given in the Wimbledon Town Hall on June 30th and July 1st. The film was shown continuously from 8 p.m. on both evenings, and proceeds are being given to the Mayor's Benevolent Fund. The Mayor, at a private presentation of the film, expressed his great pleasure at the result, and has decided to present a copy to the John Evelyn Club for historical purposes.

Members of the Wimbledon Club visited the Royal Photographic Society recently, when the first meeting of the newly-formed Federation of Cinematograph Societies was held. The meeting was well attended—an excellent sign of the support this new movement is likely to receive.

MERSEYSIDE FILM UNIT: The Secretaryship of the Society was erroneously credited to Mr. Cyril Ray in our July issue. Miss Muriel Bird is the Secretary, and her address is 5/6 Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane, Liverpool, 1.

FILMING BRITAIN—Article No. 4

Outlines to assist Amateurs entering the B.A.S.C. Contest

by Evelyn Spice

TO help all Amateurs to have a clear idea of what kind of films are wanted for the Amateur Services Club contests, I shall outline here some suggestions on all four subjects.

HOME PLANNING
HYGIENE
ARCHITECTURE
SCOTTISH YOUTH HOSTELS

HOME PLANNING

Films showing how a family might convert an old-fashioned home into a modern one, with some labour and not too much money; taking any home and showing how it could be made a more pleasant one, a more convenient place for the housewife and a more convenient place for the whole family—including father.

OR, films about a housewife, working out for herself how she could plan out her whole week to better advantage, have more leisure time and not get so tired, if certain things were done, etc.

There are many points of view from which the film could be shot; the mother's, perhaps, trying to convince the men of the house that certain changes are necessary or trying to get them to remember that she is only five foot-two and that the shelf must be a little lower than father's chin if she is to reach it with any ease. There could be a good deal of fun worked into the film and it should be a pleasant family affair.

These are only suggestions and should not be taken as the beginning and end of subjects. I should like to see some background to the film with locations in a village, town, or city, and the family introduced and set against that background so that the audience really feels they have become acquainted with the people.

NOTE.—If anybody wants a few suggestions about things to remember in kitchen planning, etc. I shall be glad to send them along.

HYGIENE

Main emphasis on cleanliness and proper feeding. Here the film may be set in a home, hospital, crêche, district, etc., emphasising the need for wise feeding, balanced meals, preparation of fresh vegetables, etc., serving of meals, and use of plenty of hot water to combat the grime that settles down from city chimneys. Here the film can be either a piece of journalism outlining the story as the film-maker sees it, or a human approach through people who plan improved conditions.

ARCHITECTURE

The main thing to avoid here is a picture composed entirely of stills, particularly if the film is a silent one.

The films might deal with the architects themselves and their work; the relationship of housing to family life; the story of modern architecture; town planning, etc.

SCOTTISH YOUTH HOSTELS

Here there is the opportunity of showing not only how cheap accommodation permits great freedom of travel for students, but also the strong link with historical times that exists in Scotland to-day. One particular section of country could be dealt with, but here again an intimate knowledge of its history and associations should be acquired before scripting. The Scots student might for example select the exact route of Prince Charlie on his long chase over the hills. But, no doubt, Scots students know more about this than I do and I can only suggest what I, as an outsider, would like to see filmed.

Of course, it must be borne in mind that the film subjects are in no way limited to the above examples, for the AMATEUR SERVICES CLUB's main purpose is to discover fresh ideas and points of view.

For full details of the Club's Contest write to Miss Evelyn Spice, Oxford House, 9-15 Oxford Street, London, W.1.

An Amateur Documentary Film Panel, which will act as intermediary between amateurs and public service organisations who wish 16 mm. films made, has been appointed by the British Film Institute and the Royal Photographic Society.

It will work in close association with the Amateur Services Club, and it is hoped that the existence of a body prepared to act as intermediary between those who provide the subject matter and those who produce the film will stimulate the production of films along social service lines.

It is planned to circulate and preserve selected films through the medium of the National Film Library, which is associated with the British Film Institute. The co-operation of professional film interests has been secured, and representatives from the Associated Realist Film Producers, the Association of Cine-Technicians, and the British Sub-standard Association have accepted invitations to sit on the panel.

Amateur workers or societies who wish to be included in the Panel's register should write to: The Secretary, The Amateur Documentary Film Panel, the British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

HOW TO BUILD SETS - No. 3

by H. Chevalier, F.P.S., A.S.E.

With completion of the sequences on the composite kitchen set preparation of the equally important but smaller sets begin. The supporting scenes in the script call for four widely differing settings. (1) Police station charge-room; (2) Steel mill manager's office; (3) Hotel bedroom; (4) Village pub. Each setting is obtained by using various sections of the kitchen set in a different manner.

Last month I explained how the set could be built in sections using hessian on deal framing. We therefore possess nine separate "flats," as they are called, one containing a doorway, marked E, (see plan shown last month) two window flats B and H, one arch piece J together with four plain "flats" A, C, D and F.

Having struck the kitchen set, we proceed to erect the Police Station setting. In the script the scene is described as follows:

"The action commences in a corridor of a police station, outside the door opening into the charge room. The players open the door, proceed into the charge room, where further action is played before the sergeant's desk, terminating with the prisoner being led to the cells."

Nothing very difficult in that description, so we construct the set as follows: across the end of the studio (18 ft. in width) erect flats D, H, and J in the given order, 2 ft. from the end wall. This provides a wall 15 ft. wide, containing a 3 ft. opening. Cover the wall with plain white ceiling paper, first letting a piece of three-ply in section H fill the window opening, finally painting the lower 4 ft. of the wall with dark brown water colour paint.

Behind the opening and against the wall hang a grey curtain making sure the fabric is taut, otherwise wrinkles will show when this back cloth is lighted from the side.

Charge desk

For the charge desk, the table is used from the kitchen set increased in height 1ft. 6 in., by nailing a length of 3 by 2 rough deal to each leg. Cover the front, two sides and top, with 3-ply, papering the sides with white ceiling paper, completing by spraying with coat of dark brown water paint. Place the charge desk in a central position midway between the D and H sections, leaving a space of about 3 ft. between desk and wall.

To obtain the corridor effect called for, and allowing for a slight panning of the camera, erect sections F, E, and A in position 8 ft. in front of the back "flat," making sure that section E (the door section) is in line with the charge desk. Cover this "flat" with ceiling paper panelling the door with ½ inch beading, after papering, painting the whole door and the lower four feet of wall dark brown as on the back "flat."

For the corridor shot, we have now 14 ft. 3 in. of wall containing a 2 ft. 6in. door and 10 ft. of space between the wall of the studio and the "flat." The floor of the studio being wood is left without covering and the only props necessary are pen, ink and charge book on the sergeant's desk, a wastepaper basket, wall calendar (used in the shot) and various notices on the wall. The very bareness assists the cold hard atmosphere required on the screen.

When the final dissolve is reached, the door "flat" can be cheated round to give a long shot of the prisoner being conducted to the cells (through the arch) with the group standing before the charge desk, seen through the open door from the corridor. For reverse shots, the door "flat" is turned round the opposite way, and cheated round as required.

Manager's office

Steel Works Manager's Office: This particular set is very simple consisting only of two walls. In the script the scene is described as "A large room with a view of the steel works, seen through a window behind the works manager's desk. The door is situated on the left-hand side and all the necessary action takes place between the door and desk.

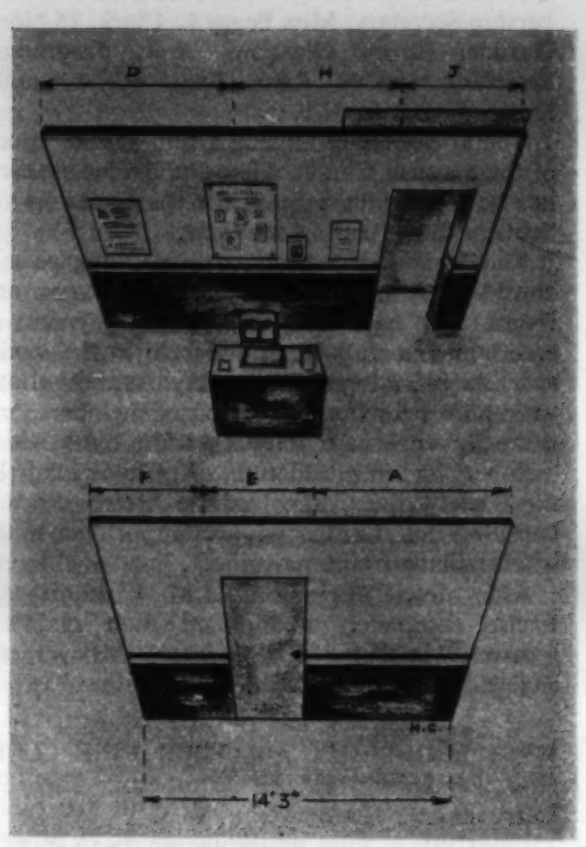
This time we place the back "flat" along the 20 ft. wall of the studio leaving a 4 ft. space between the "flat" and the wall. Section A is then erected with the left hand end one foot from the 18 ft. wall; section D is erected in the same line, 5 ft. 3 in. away. The lower three feet of this opening is then filled by laying section C down sideways on its 3 ft. side, behind the opening. The remainder of the opening is the window and 1 in. laths are nailed across to represent the window frames.

At the left-hand side of the "flat," section F is erected, 2 ft. from the left hand end of section A, to produce a 5 ft. wall in place of the original 7 ft., without cutting the section. We now have a 3 ft. space between the back of section F and the 18 ft. wall of the studio. Door section E and section H are then erected in line with F. For this shot the door will have to be reversed and hung on the opposite side to open inward.

The walls and both sides of the door are covered with imitation wood wallpaper hung horizontally using a good size paste. Paint the window laths black and stretch fine black net across the opening behind the laths. This will diffuse the background and eliminate the use of glass in the window. Outside the window, on the studio wall paste white ceiling paper, covering an area about 9 ft. 6 in. wide. On this background, paint with light and dark grey water paint a rough representation of a steel mill exterior. Absolute accuracy is not essential, as the backing will be out of focus during the takes.

In the centre of section A, paste a plan of the works, this can be drawn specially, using imagination. A map occupies a similar position on section F. As a carpet will cover most of the floor, cover the remainder that appears in the shot with hessian and brown paper, varnishing the paper when dry with copal varnish. The desk occupies the space in front of the window with a bent steel chair at the desk and one on the left of the desk. In the corner stands a tubular steel hat rack. All these props are hired.

The only other necessity is a black curtain, on the wall outside the door and the setting is more or less complete. Letter trays, inkstand, blotters, business papers, etc., are then required to complete the minor details of the setting, and the scene can be shot.



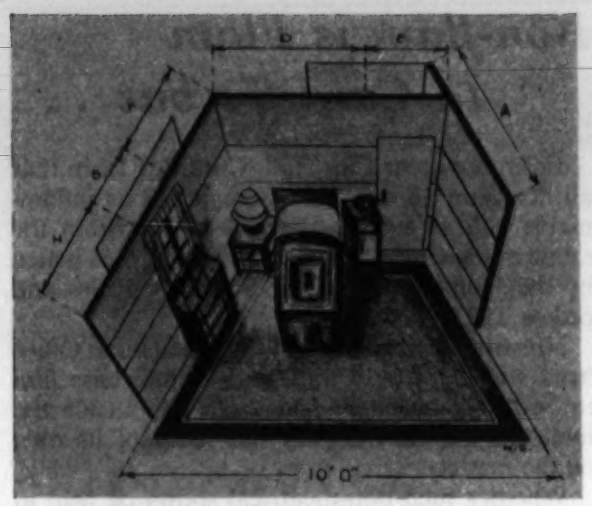
Police Station ¼" scale

Hotel Bedroom: The reason for shooting the hotel bedroom scenes immediately after the mill manager's office sequence is economy, for we can use the same sections, in a different way, preserving the fairly expensive wood wall paper.

The hotel bedroom set is erected across the 18 ft. width of the studio, placing section H, B, and F on the left-hand side, 8 ft. from the studio wall. Butting on to this "flat" are sections D and E, at right angles, with section A at right angles on the right-hand side overlapping 2 ft. as before, in the previous set.

In this setting section B is used for the first time and will need touching up, painting the window frame aluminium. Outside the window a white curtain will be needed, tight back against the studio wall, together with the usual black curtain outside the door. The props in this scene are simple and few: a walnut bed, a bed-side table and the table lamp on the right-hand side of the bed, and a bed-side cabinet holding the house telephone on the left-hand side. Floor covering is carpet, so the same floor covering as used in the last scene can again be used, if desired. The window curtains are printed cretonne with a valance of the same material, and a tallboy standing directly in front of the window. The table lamp must be practical as it is used in the shot completing the setting.

The Village Pub: We have now reached the final setting in the film, and perhaps the most complicated from the props standpoint. Quite a lot of action takes place on this set, requiring a large number of set-ups so the set is rather larger than would otherwise be necessary.



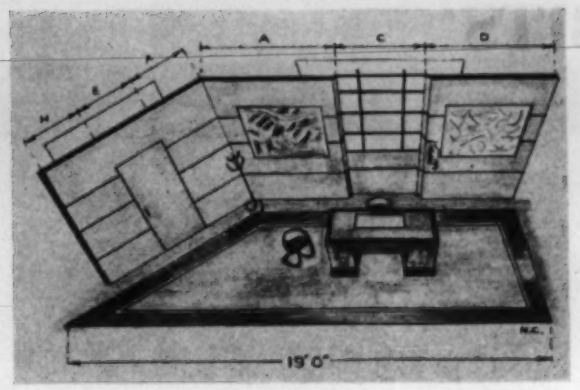
Hotel Bedroom ¼" Scale

The left hand wall is constructed from sections B and C, the back wall from sections E, A, H and F and the bar is divided into the sections by the cross wall, section J with section D butted on. For the bar itself, a curved counter is built from the edge of the arch opening to the end of section A, a distance of 12 ft.

This bar counter is constructed from three-ply, and rough 3 and 2 deal battens, but before actually building the counter, the exact dimensions of the beer engine hired for the shot must be taken into account. The only parts needed are the pump handles, the rest can be faked.

Behind the counter, a set of shelves are required constructed from ¼ in. three-ply separated by 1 in. round dowelling. Along the edge of the shelves tack on some ½ in. moulding to impart an appearance of solidity. The shelves continue right past the opening to the end of section F.

To save expense and time the lower section of the shelves can be composed of beer crates laid lengthways two tiers high and the shelves built on top. With the exception of sections J and B the "flats" are covered with wood wallpaper, therefore it will be cheaper to cover these remaining "flats" with the same paper rather than re-paper the whole bar.



Steel Mill Manager's Office ¼" Scale

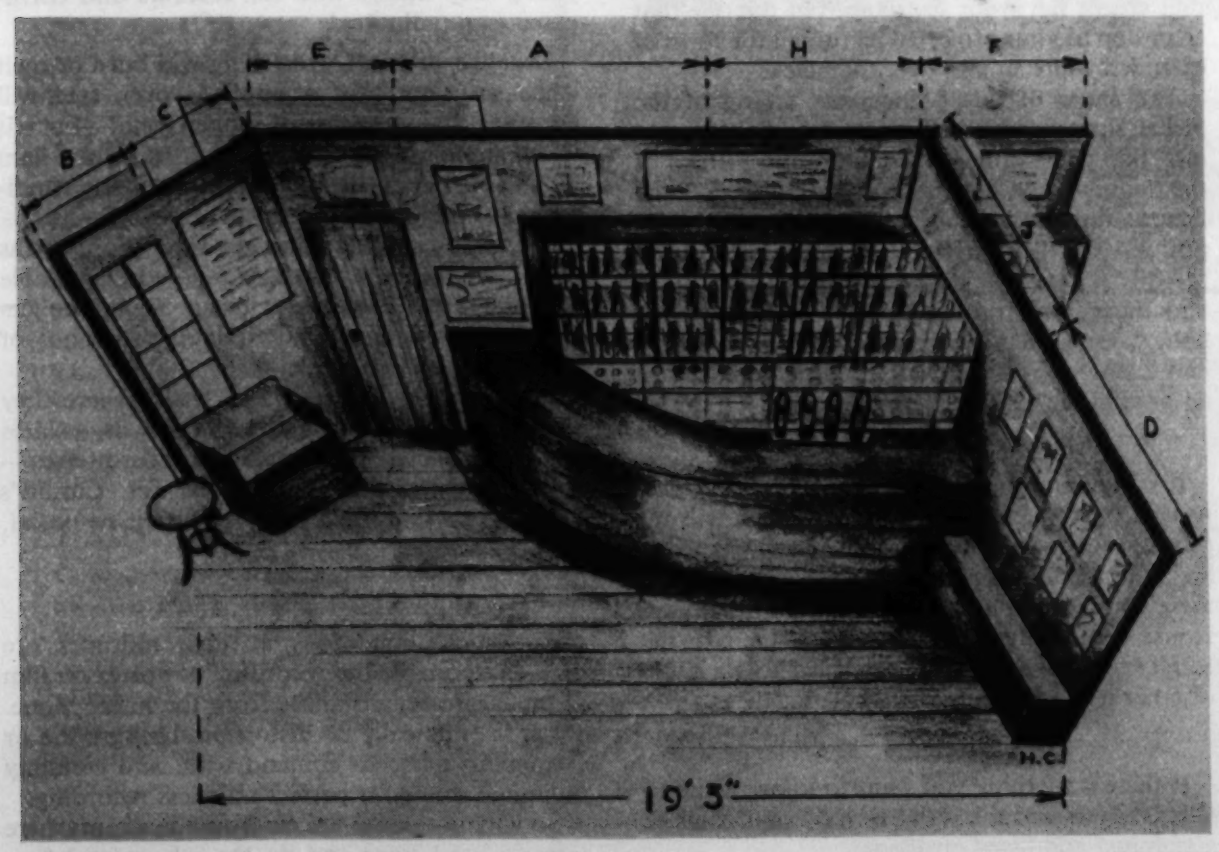
The next operation is to spray all the walls with a thin coat of medium grey water paint to give the wood an aged appearance. The shelving and bar can be painted dark brown, or sprayed with one of the many ready mixed mahogany floor stains. If any are available, one or two mirrors placed behind the shelves will brighten the background considerably.

To line the shelves various whisky and gin bottles are required, pint and half pint glasses, dummy cigarette packets, biscuits, etc. On the counter a glass sandwich cover will be required together with various beer and cigarette advertising showcards.

On the walls old prints or maps will help to convey the homely atmosphere of a village pub. Two or three wooden forms together with wood topped tables and a little sawdust on the floor will help produce "atmosphere."

The final requirements are a black curtain outside the door and the cretonne window curtains, this time sprayed lightly with dark grey paint. The window frame can be repainted dark grey, if desired, completing a very authentic little setting. The final action in the pub takes place at night after closing time, providing a fine opportunity for dramatic lighting, as a contrast to the previous cheerful lighting when the scene opens.

Next month, I will summarise the series, giving lighting and camera details, for future reference.



Village Pub ¼" Scale

Tests on Safety Film

Here are the results of some tests carried out on Safety Film :—

One 16 mm. safety film was stopped in the gate of a projector employing a 400 watt projector lamp with the safety shutter out of action. The photographic image disappeared in one and a half seconds, after this the film shrivelled and turned brown, giving off slight fumes, but it showed no signs of taking fire.

A 50 ft. spool of film was treated as follows. The spool was rested on a wire gauze so that the inner end of the spool was over the edge of the gauze. This was rested on a tripod and a Bunsen flame was directed on to the overhanging open type part of the spool for fully five minutes. During this time the film melted and frothed and finally became a red-hot charred mass. After the Bunsen flame had been removed, a small flame flickered over the molten part of the film for 15 seconds and then went out.

In my opinion, the only conditions under which safety film will burn unaided for more than a few seconds, is when a long strip hanging vertically is heated at the lower end, so that the flame actually surrounds the unburnt film. Even under these circumstances the film will very slowly burn for not more than 30 seconds, for, as the burning portion falls off, the flame goes out almost immediately.

To make the film burn at all, the film has to be heated very thoroughly, e.g. by placing a Bunsen burner on it for 15 seconds, and if the film is only heated momentarily, it shrivels without taking fire.

It is practically impossible to make the film fire in a downward direction, however strongly it is heated initially.

By placing 50 feet of film on a metal container which was baked over a flame, a naked light placed over an outlet for gas escape failed to locate any flammable gases. A thousand watt projector lamp focussed on to a stationary safety film, minus safety shutter, melted the exposed film clean away in 30 seconds, without signs of smoke or flame, but there was positively no spread of the effect beyond that of the lighted area.

D. M.

A New Portable Screen

From the U.S.A. comes a really excellent portable screen, really lightweight, really compact, and very efficient. The prices too are surprisingly reasonable.

One type employs an uncreasable fabric, almost like silk rubber, which, together with the collapsible stand, folds up into a small travelling case, and is but a few pounds in weight.

Another type, consists of a spring loaded roller, into which the screen is rolled, using silver beaded or fabric screens measuring up to 10 feet. The stand is constructed of light metal, and is very rigid, the metal screen container is hooked across the top, and the screen is pulled down to its proper limit and attached to hooks on the uprights.

There is nothing simpler on the market, neither is there anything to compare with its neatness, lightness and cost.

It is the very thing for travelling units, the last word in portability. I imagine it will be a boon to every non-theatrical user, as the smallest up to the largest screens can now be purchased in cases equivalent in length to one quarter of the total length of the screen.

The WORLD FILM NEWS will be pleased to supply further information on application.

D. M.

TECHNICAL TIT-BITS

By David Myers

Cleaning oil and dirt from film is quite a simple matter, but care has to be exercised. Two large pieces of soft clean rag and a bottle of methylated spirit is all that is required. Soak one piece of the material in the spirit, fold it, and proceed to draw the film through the folds under even pressure, in about three-foot lengths at a time. Do not allow the wet film to lie in folds, but immediately it is dry, polish both surfaces with the dry material and rewind on to another spool. It is absolutely important that the surface of the material be changed after each pull through of the film, otherwise scratching will result from the multiplication of dirt and grit on the surface.

* * * *

The indiscriminate cutting of a film when in the hands of a certain local cinema, nearly caused a riot. Finding a torn part of the film, the operator quite rightly cut it out with the scissors and of course a part of the sound track bearing a syllable of a word spoken went with it.

It happened to be a Tom Walls' picture where he called his partner "a blasted fool," but unfortunately the pronunciation was altered to "bastered fool" by the cutting of the "L"—Oh, hell!

* * * *

When rewinding a film always hold the film between the left thumb and first finger, putting light pressure on the outer edges of the film only. Never allow the fingers to come in contact with the emulsion surface as this scratches it. In a short while, no matter how fast you rewind, you will be able to detect whether the click you felt was a join, torn perforation, or a half-undone join. Never tighten up the film on a spool, but keep an even pressure on the "free" spool throughout the process of rewinding. Tightening up of the film on the spool by "skidding it," scratches the surfaces from beginning to end.

* * * *

Never turn out the lights when commencing a film show until such time as the picture is on the screen and sound is heard. This serves many purposes and obviates many risks and spoilt shows.

* * * *

If you lose sound during projection, do not stop the projector, the picture itself is better than nothing, and secondly, how are you to know you have rectified the trouble when you cannot get sound until the machine *is* running?

* * * *

If you ever experience "rattles" coming from your loudspeaker, examine the speaker cabinet, such noises can usually be traced to foreign bodies such as loose screws or particles of grit responding to the frequences by jumping up and down within the cabinet.

* * * *

I was once called on a service visit to a cinema that had the "Squeals." Intermittently coming above the sound could be heard something likened only to that of a cat's cry. By a process of elimination, including that of a search for a cat in the loudspeakers, I discovered that a microphonic exciting lamp was responsible. A loose

filament in the lamp was transmitting the microphonic noises to the photo electric cell, and for your guidance, many strange noises can result from this source.

* * * *

The sound effect of a running train is often required, and a simple and effective way to do this is by cutting the track with a penknife at the point where the needle runs round and round in the centre of a gramophone record when it has finished playing. The cuts can be placed at even or uneven distances apart to give that "bom-e-de-bom" effect of the carriage wheels passing over the joints in the lines.

* * * *

Just for amusement, take a strip of film on which the sound track is "vacant" and with a fine pen, draw in an imaginary track with indian ink. Play it back through your reproducer and you will soon find a means of amusing your friends.

* * * *

Here is a formula for non-flam cement (not my own); one part each of glacial acetic acid, amyl acetate, and acetic ether, it is quite cheap too, but for convenience and reliable service try "Cinecraft" as sold in small bottles, once a joint is sealed with this cement, it never parts.

* * * *

What is a "Ghost"? No, I don't mean the one that creeps into your bedroom, but the one that creeps on to your projected picture in the form of extended white streaks over the blacks.

The cause of this is incorrect timing of the flicker shutter, which allows a part of the "moving" film to be projected to the screen instead of the "cover blade" of the shutter, cutting off the light as the film is being drawn to the stationary position in the aperture for projection. It is actually forward or backward in relation to the film move, thus projecting part of the moving film. The shutter is adjustable for this reason, and instructions for setting, to clear a ghost, are covered in the maintenance manuals.

* * *

It is rumoured that the Western Electric Company are producing a loudspeaker that will reproduce up to 14,000 cycles and which is to be no larger than a tea cup! But if they cannot record these fourteen thousand cycles on film at Busch House I know they can pohtograph them at the Hercules works, for after all, a cycle is a cycle whether it is chromium-plated or not !!!

* * * *

If there's anything you want to know, write to David Myers about it, c/o "*W.F.N.*" and enclose a stamped addressed envelope.

Non-flam is Flam to Cardiff - but . . .

From the great City Hall, Cardiff, I learn that all non-flam 16 mm. film is regarded as inflammable and as such is deemed to be within the scope of the Cinematograph Act of 1909 as issued by the Home Office under Statutory Rules and orders 1923, No. 983.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Home Office itself still regards 16 mm. and acetate base film to be "slow burning" and therefore outside the limits of the Act, Cardiff has ideas of its own on the matter.

Whether such non-theatrical shows be held in licensed or unlicensed halls makes no difference, all shows must be notified to the authorities not less than seven days in advance of the actual performance.

A visit follows from an official of the Fire Brigade, who will dictate what must be done to ensure safety and what must not be done. You will be told that the shows must be held only in rooms or halls on the street level, that the projectors must be run off an alternative circuit from that of the lighting in the room in question, quite good points, but when it comes to totally enclosing the projector and limiting the amount of film to be shown in the programme because of fire risks—well, that's just going too far.

Whether the local fire authorities have discovered a way to fire such film on the projector or on the floor I do not know, but I seriously doubt it.

In the commercial cinemas where they are using highly inflammable nitrate film, and where even under the strictest regulations, fires do occur occasionally, one can understand strict supervision and control, and it leaves me wondering why Cardiff does not strike a new level in this respect.

Might I suggest that they provide the projectionists with asbestos suits and brass helmets? And, perhaps, it would be as well to provide the young lady ushers with tin knickers and corrugated iron pullovers.

Because, after all, everything will burn or melt when sufficient heat is applied—even steel will become a flaming mass of molten metal—but is it to be supposed for one moment, that non-flam film will burn at all, especially under the conditions in which it is used?

It is simply amazing that in a local Woolworths Stores one can still purchase highly inflammable celluloid rattles and toys which are capable collectively of cremating hundreds and thousands of innocent babies all for 3*d*. or 6*d*.

"Yes, sir," even in Cardiff itself, where they strive to curb the activities of the reds—whites and blues, including the nudist fans themselves—from showing their films. But for Cardiff's babies . . . a Viking's funeral is a fitting memorial.

Acoustical conditions at high altitudes are such as to enable the recording of voices on film at much greater distances from the microphone. There is practically no distortion, background or extraneous noise to contend with, and certainly unlimited scope for perfect noiseless recording.

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And today, textbooks are supplemented by pictures that live, pictures that illustrate and make real the scenes of history, that move to the classroom the laboratories of science, that give civics and other studies new meaning, that unfold the world's knowledge on the motion picture screen for your children and ours to study. That talkies are a major step forward in teaching technique is a certainty.

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